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'LE MISANTHROPE' (I)

I.

THE *MISANTHROPE* is by common consent the greatest of Molière's plays, but attempts to discover the nature of its peculiar excellence have sometimes led critics into unprofitable paths. The Romantic critics found in it the main support for their theory of 'the tragic Molière'; M. Ramon Fernandez, the stern champion of 'philosophical criticism', has spoken of 'cette comédie où le principe même de la comédie est mis en péril'; and a German writer has used it to propound a theory of 'die Dämonie der grossen Komik'.[1] These theories have one factor in common. They suggest that the *Misanthrope* is in some way 'deeper', more 'profound', more 'serious' than Molière's other works, overlooking perhaps the fact that comedy is 'essentially a serious activity'.[2] Compare it with *Tartuffe* and the dangers of such a criterion are at once apparent. It is not difficult to see in what sense the *Misanthrope* and *Tartuffe* are more 'serious' than *les Femmes savantes* or *l'Avare*, but we should be on very uncertain ground in claiming that the *Misanthrope* is more serious than *Tartuffe*. Indeed, it would be less difficult to prove the contrary. *Tartuffe* has obvious affinities with primitive comedy. The most striking of them is the sacrificial element. Tartuffe is the scapegoat whose chastisement provides a release for the audience's primitive desires and emotions and Molière knew very well what he was about when he underlined the sexual propensities of his victim. The play appeals to some of the deepest though not the most admirable of human instincts and it has a ferocity which is unparalleled in Molière's work. 'Mon opinion sur *Tartuffe*', wrote Baudelaire in his diary, 'est que ce n'est pas une comédie, mais un pamphlet'. This is an overstatement, but it helps us to appreciate the limitations of that masterpiece and the superiority of the *Misanthrope*.

The *Misanthrope* in the seventeenth century was the connoisseur's play and a contemporary described it with felicity as 'une pièce qui fait rire dans l'âme'. Its pre-eminence lies not in greater depth or profundity, but in a greater variety of tone, a wider social

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[1] Curt Sigmar Gutkind in *Molière und das Komische Drama* (Halle, 1928). It is only fair to add that the point is not unduly stressed and that his chapter on the *Misanthrope* seems to me to be the best study of the play that I have come across in any language.

[2] How little this has been understood in France, where the distinction between tragedy and comedy is much more definite than in England, can be seen from Brunetière's '*Le Misanthrope* et *Tartuffe* sont déjà des tragédies bourgeoises que Molière a vainement essayé de faire entrer dans le cadre de la comédie'. ('Les Epoques de la comédie de Molière' in *Etudes critiques sur l'histoire de la littérature française*, VIII, 3ème éd. Paris, 1922, pp. 116-7).

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reference, more complex and more delicate shades of feeling. It is the most personal of Molière's plays. *Tartuffe* was a magnificent onslaught on a narrow, vindictive puritanism which had all but succeeded in driving comedy from the stage. The *Misanthrope* was written during a personal crisis and is certainly coloured by Molière's own domestic difficulties. We must be careful not to read too much into the play, but those critics who have found its laughter 'sad' are on the right track and there is no doubt that personal suffering helped to give Molière the astonishing insight into the human heart which he displays in the *Misanthrope* and which contributes to its richness and maturity.

II.

'Il n'a pas voulu faire une comédie pleine d'incidents', said Visé in a commentary which is believed to have been published with Molière's approval, 'mais une pièce seulement où il pût parler contre les moeurs du siècle'.

There is one striking difference between the *Misanthrope* and Molière's other plays. He does not confine himself to the study of the psychology of an individual seen against the background of a stable society. His irony is turned on society as well as on Alceste and the play ends, as we shall see, not with the restoration of order, but with something that is very like a mark of interrogation.

The theme is presented by means of a triple conflict—the conflict between Alceste and social convention, Alceste and justice, Alceste and Célimène. It is the constant shifting of the focus from one to the other and the way in which Molière plays on our divided sympathies that give the *Misanthrope* its variety, so that it calls for a greater effort of attention from the reader than any of the other comedies.

Knights has suggested that a close examination of the tone and intention of each line in the first scene is the best way of discovering how the play as a whole should be read.[3] The opening scene is so carefully constructed and the theme stated with such clarity and force that almost everything which follows is a development of hints and suggestions contained in it.

PHILINTE

Qu'est-ce donc? Qu'avez-vous?

ALCESTE [*assis.*]

Laissez-moi, je vous prie.

PHILINTE

Mais encor, dites-moi, quelle bizarrerie . . .

ALCESTE

Laissez-moi là, vous dis-je, et courez vous cacher.

PHILINTE

Mais on entend les gens, au moins, sans se fâcher.

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[3]In *Determinations*, London, 1934, p. 118.

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ALCESTE
Moi, je veux me fâcher, et ne veux point entendre.

PHILINTE
Dans vos brusques chagrins je ne puis vous comprendre,
Et, quoique amis, enfin, je suis tout des premiers . . .

ALCESTE [*se levant brusquement*]
Moi, votre ami? Rayez cela de vos papiers.
J'ai fait jusques ici profession de l'être;
Mais après ce qu'en vous je viens de voir paraître,
Je vous déclare net que je ne le suis plus,
Et ne veux nulle place en des coeurs corrompus.

The plays opens on a note which sounds uncommonly like farce, but the intention is highly serious. There is something wrong with Alceste and most of the play is devoted to discovering what it is. It makes his behaviour so unreasonable that he becomes incomprehensible to the tolerant and reasonable Philinte. The violent tone is characteristic and an understanding of it leads to an understanding of the motifs behind it. The *cacher* and the *brusques chagrins* are important clues—the unobtrusive stage direction, *se levant brusquement,* illustrates the close connection between word and gesture in Molière—and their recurrence in the play emphasizes the closeness of its texture.

The dialogue that follows explains the origin of Alceste's *chagrin,* but before examining it in detail, I wish to jump eighty lines and look at the next use of the word:

ALCESTE
Mes yeux sont trop blessés, et la cour et la ville
Ne m'offrent rien qu'objets à m'échauffer la bile;
J'entre en une humeur noire, en un chagrin profond,
Quand je vois vivre entre eux les hommes comme ils font . .

PHILINTE
Ce chagrin philosophe est un peu trop sauvage.
Je ris des noirs accès où je vous envisage . . .

It is clear that for Alceste the *humeur noire* and the *chagrin profond* are a matter of deadly seriousness, but it is also clear from the change of tone and the ironical *chagrin philosophe* that they have a different value for Philinte. It is characteristic of the peculiar ambiguity of the play and of Philinte's place in it that we feel doubtful at this point whether the *chagrin* is or is not a laughing matter. There is still room for doubt when he goes on four lines later:

Non, tout de bon, quittez toutes ces incartades.
Le monde par vos soins ne se changera pas;
Et puisque la franchise a pour vous tant d'appas,
Je vous dirai tout franc que cette maladie,
Partout où vous allez, donne la comédie . . .

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Philinte drops the tone of easy banter and proceeds to give a serious warning. The *chagrin* is now described as *cette maladie* and we are meant to take the word at its face value; but it is still a *maladie* which in the eyes of the world *donne la comédie*. There is a conflict of values. The *chagrin* has a different significance for different individuals. The doubt lies in deciding what importance should be attached to the respective valuations of Alceste, Philinte and *le monde*. Are they all right or all wrong, or partly right and partly wrong?

This doubt is really the crux of the whole play and it is interesting to glance at the use of this and similar words—the *désert* and the *endroit écarté*—in other contexts:

1. Têtebleu! ce me sont de mortelles blessures
De voir qu'avec le vice on garde des mesures;
Et parfois il me prend des mouvements soudains
De fuir dans un *désert* l'approche des humains.
(I, i).

2. C'est que jamais, morbleu! les hommes n'ont raison,
Que *le chagrin contre eux* est toujours de saison . . .
(II, iv).

3. Elle tâche à couvrir d'un faux voile de prude
Ce que chez elle on voit *d'affreuse solitude* . . .
(Célimène of Arsinoé, III, iii).

4. Allez-vous en la voir, et me laissez enfin
Dans ce petit coin sombre, avec *mon noir chagrin*.
(V, i).

5. Pour vu que votre coeur veuille donner les mains
Au dessein que j'ai fait de fuir tous les humains,
Et que dans mon *désert*, où j'ai fait voeu de vivre,
Vous soyez, sans tarder, résolue à me suivre . . .
(V, iv).

6. Trahi de toutes parts, accablé d'injustices,
Je vais sortir d'un *gouffre* où triomphent les vices,
Et chercher sur la terre *un endroit écarté*
Où d'être homme d'honneur on ait la liberté.
(V, iv).

It is tempting but dangerous to compare Alceste's *chagrin* with Pascal's vision of *l'abîme*[4] or even with Baudelaire's *spleen*, because in doing so we run the risk of serious misinterpretation. Alceste is painfully conscious of his perplexity and frustration, but it is evident from these examples that his attitude is a *personal* one. It does not spring from a vision which transcends the deceptive appearances of the everyday world. It is largely negative, is directed *contre* [*les hommes*]; and in the fourth example, where he caricatures himself, he seems for a moment to be aware that there is something a little

[4]See Sainte-Beuve's interesting, but to my mind misleading discussion of Pascal and Molière in *Port-Royal*, III, Paris, 1848, pp. 201 *et seq*.

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absurd about his *chagrin*. There is a burlesque note, too, in the fifth and sixth examples. Alceste strikes a pose. He renounces the world and goes off to play at being 'a man of honour' in the 'desert'. Now the 'desert' is both objective and subjective and it has certain affinities with Arsinoé's *affreuse solitude* which are suggested by a passage in M. François Mauriac's interesting essay on the play:

> 'Dans un monde où il y aurait tant de raisons pour un honnête homme et pour un chrétien, sinon de crier, du moins de s'interroger, Alceste ne s'en prend qu'aux usages les plus anodins, à ces mensonges dont personne n'est dupe mais qui sont nécessaires à la vie de société. Il s'indigne de médisances qui ne touchent qu'aux travers, n'atteignent pas les vices cachés et ne suscitent que le rire. Dans un monde où l'injustice surabonde et où le crime est partout, il ne se gendarme que contre le fretin. Il n'éprouve pas d'horreur pour ce qui est vraiment horrible—et d'abord pour lui-même: toutes ses pointes sont toujours tournées vers le dehors; il ne se compare que pour se trouver meilleur'.[5]

M. Mauriac's criticism of Alceste seems to me to be unduly severe and there is, perhaps, a tendency to simplify the issues, but it does illuminate one side of his character. A good deal of his *chagrin contre les hommes* springs from a psychological need to distract his attention from his own sense of frustration, from 'what is horrible' in his own nature and in this he is representative of the society that he is attacking. For all the characters on whom Molière turns his irony are in a greater or lesser degree aware of their own interior emptiness, of an *affreuse solitude* from which they are trying to escape. This explains their restless activity, their desperate preoccupation with gossip and *galanterie*. While the struggle to escape from themselves by losing themselves in the world of minor social events is one of the principal themes of the play, it must be emphasized that Molière's study of their vacancy and fatuity is not a tragic one. The *Misanthrope* is pre-eminently a comedy; it is not a *tragédie bourgeoise* in the manner of *l'Education sentimentale*.

III.

It is time to turn to a consideration of the individual characters and their place in the pattern of the play, and to the sources of Alceste's *chagrin*. His first long speech is a denunciation of social convention:

> Je vous vois accabler un homme de caresses,
> Et témoigner pour lui les dernières tendresses;
> De protestations, d'offres et de serments
> Vous chargez la fureur de vos embrassements;
> Et quand je vous demande après quel est cet homme,
> A peine pouvez-vous dire comme il se nomme;
> Votre chaleur pour lui tombe en vous séparant,

[5] *Journal, II*, Paris, 1937, pp. 147-8.

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Et vous me le traitez, à moi, d'indifférent.
Morbleu! c'est une chose indigne, lâche, infâme,
De s'abaisser ainsi jusqu'à trahir son âme;
Et si par un malheur j'en avais fait autant,
Je m'irais, de regret, pendre tout à l'instant.

The tone of nervous exasperation, the taste for extremes signified by *accabler, dernières tendresses, fureur de vos embrassements,* and the piled up adjectives rising to a crescendo—*indigne, lâche, infâme*—is peculiar to Alceste, and there is an obvious disproportion between the language used and the 'usages les plus anodins' which he is attacking. He uses precisely the same tone in speaking of his lawsuit and his love affair:

Quoi! contre ma partie on voit tout à la fois
L'honneur, la probité, la pudeur, et les lois;
On publie en tous lieux l'équité de ma cause,
Sur la foi de mon droit mon âme se repose;
Cependant je me vois trompé par le succès:
J'ai pour moi la justice, et je perds mon procès!
Un traître, dont on sait la scandaleuse histoire,
Est sorti triomphant d'une fausseté noire!
Toute la bonne foi cède à sa trahison!
Il trouve, en m'égorgeant, moyen d'avoir raison!
Le poids de sa grimace, où brille l'artifice,
Renverse le bon droit et tourne la justice!

* * *

J'ai ce que sans mourir je ne puis concevoir;
Et le déchaînement de toute la nature
Ne m'accablerait pas comme cette aventure.
C'en est fait . . . Mon amour . . . Je ne saurais parler.

The uniformity of tone shows that he reacts in precisely the same way to three different situations, that he places the same valuation on his campaign against convention, his lawsuit and his love affair. There is certainly a connection between the three, but they are very far from being of the same importance. His cult of sincerity is a fetish. If his principles were adopted social intercourse would come to an end and it is perhaps because he is a threat to a brittle society that his attitude is unpopular. There is more to be said for his other preoccupations. Philinte admits that he has a grievance over the unfortunate lawsuit, and Célimène confesses that she has treated him badly. But though they sympathise with him, they are at one in protesting against the violence of his denunciation and the extravagance of his remedies. 'I agree with all you say', remarks Philinte:

. . . je tombe d'accord de tout ce qu'il vous plaît:
Tout marche par cabale et par pur intérêt;
Ce n'est plus que la ruse aujourd'hui qui l'emporte,
Et les hommes devraient être faits d'autre sorte.

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Mais est-ce une raison que leur peu d'équité
Pour vouloir se tirer de leur société?[6]

In short, Alceste's attitude betrays a confusion of values, an extraordinary lack of discrimination which alone would make him ludicrous. Minor mishaps are the pretext for wild generalizations about human nature; the perfidy of a shallow, frivolous society woman assumes the proportions of a universal catastrophe in his disordered imagination, and his denunciation peters out in a strangled cry:

C'en est fait . . . Mon amour . . . Je ne saurais parler.

The more we study his pronouncements, the more evident it becomes that his attitude is the reverse of disinterested. When he declares

Je veux qu'on soit sincère, et qu'en homme d'honneur
On ne lâche aucun mot qui ne parte du coeur.

we may feel that though this is a counsel of perfection, it is not unreasonable. A few lines later, however, his real objections to the insincere enthusiasm with which people greet one another emerge very clearly:

Je refuse d'un coeur la vaste complaisance
Qui ne fait de mérite aucune différence;
Je veux qu'on me distingue, et, pour le trancher net,
L'ami du genre humain n'est point du tout mon fait.

There is a strong element of vanity in his protests. He is determined that people shall be made to distinguish him from his fellows, and the lines betray a sense of instability, a psychological need of affirmation. When Philinte suggests in the first scene that he should visit some of the judges who will try his suit, he refuses angrily:

Non; j'ai résolu de n'en pas faire un pas.
J'ai tort ou j'ai raison.

The second line is a curious illustration of the rigidity of Alceste's mind which prevents any compromise with society; but it is interesting for another reason. It has not always been understood by contemporary readers who have felt that his attitude is commendable and have compared it favourably with Célimène's assiduous 'touting' in *her* lawsuit. Now it must be remembered that in the seventeenth century the practice of visiting one's judges was universal and was not regarded as being in any way improper. The explanation of Alceste's refusal is to be found in his reaction to Philinte's suggestion that he should appeal against the decision when he loses his case:

[6]Italics mine.

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Non; je veux m'y tenir.
Quelque sensible tort qu'un tel arrêt me fasse,
Je me garderai bien de vouloir qu'on le casse:
On y voit trop à plein le bon droit maltraité,
Et je veux qu'il demeure à la postérité
Comme une marque insigne, un fameux témoignage
De la méchanceté des hommes de notre âge.
Ce sont vingt mille francs qu'il m'en pourra coûter;
Mais pour vingt mille francs j'aurai droit de pester
Contre l'iniquité de la nature humaine,
Et de nourrir pour elle une immortelle haine.

These are not the words of a fighter or a reformer. Alceste is convinced that there has been a miscarriage of justice; but instead of trying to set it right, he is delighted at the loss of his suit because he feels that it gives him a *right* to fulminate against human nature and this right seems cheap at twenty thousand francs. This is characteristic of his general behaviour. He is always on the look out for some abuse that he can attack or some one with whom he can pick a quarrel and the slightest excuse is sufficient to set the machinery of excited denunciation in motion. 'Quoi!' cries the horrified Philinte

Quoi! vous iriez dire à la vieille Émilie
Qu'à son âge il sied mal de faire la jolie,
Et que le blanc qu'elle a scandalise chacun?

ALCESTE

Sans doute.

PHILINTE

A Dorilas, qu'il est trop importun,
Et qu'il n'est, à la cour, oreille qu'il ne lasse
A conter sa bravoure et l'éclat de sa race?

ALCESTE

Fort bien.

This suggests that his attitude is to a certain extent *voulu*. While it is true that denunciation is a form of self-indulgence, a substitute for *action*, this does not exhaust the question. It is noticeable that in most of the plays the *honnête homme* treats this heated denunciation as the danger point. It is the point at which the normative influence of society ceases to be effective and the comic character's hysterical mood may well lead to some desperate act. It is for this reason that Philinte's warnings are always directed against Alceste's *tone* and not against what he says. Now Alceste's violence deserves a closer examination than it has perhaps received. In the *Misanthrope* Molière lifted and adapted a number of passages from his unsuccessful Cornelian exercise, *Dom Garcie de Navarre*, which was written eight years earlier. It is a striking fact that words which sound hollow and unreal in that play have nothing strange about them when used by Alceste to denounce Célimène's perfidy and are indeed in perfect keeping with his character:

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Que toutes les horreurs dont une âme est capable
A vos déloyautés n'ont rien de comparable;
Que le sort, les démons, et le Ciel en courroux
N'ont jamais rien produit de si méchant que vous.

In reading these lines we become aware that the times have changed. The heroic age is past. Molière's comic characters are the successors of the Cornelian heroes and the drive which once enabled them to overcome great obstacles serves another purpose. Instead of creating order, it leads to disorder:

Je ne suis plus à moi, je suis tout à la rage:
Percé du coup mortel dont vous m'assassinez,
Mes sens par la raison ne sont plus gouvernés,
Je cède aux mouvements d'une juste colère,
Et je ne réponds pas de ce que je puis faire.

Although these lines look forward to Racine's

Je me suis engagé trop avant:
Je vois que la raison cède à la violence

the tragic sense that one has exceeded all limits, that all one's supports have gone, is absent. Alceste is not, even at such moments, a tragic figure. His denunciation, though undeniably serious in tone, belongs peculiarly to comedy and there is an interesting passage at the beginning of the play which helps us to appreciate why this is so:

Non, je ne puis souffrir cette lâche méthode
Qu'affectent la plupart de vos gens à la mode;
Et je hais rien tant que les contorsions
De tous ces grands faiseurs de protestations,
Ces affables donneurs d'embrassades frivoles,
Ces obligeants diseurs d'inutiles paroles,
Qui de civilités avec tous font combat,
Et traitent du même air l'honnête homme et le fat.

What is striking about these lines is a curious air of unreality, is the sense that we are watching a Punch-and-Judy show. This is no accident. The violence and the jerkiness have a different function here. The focal word is *contorsions* and it colours the rest of the passage. The element of caricature is deliberate. This is not abstract denunciation of real people; it is society as it appears to Alceste. We feel ourselves looking at it through his eyes and seeing a world of grinning, gesticulating marionettes, going through their grotesque performance as some unseen showman pulls the strings. For Alceste's violence leads to a state of hysteria—Molière's word for it is *emportement*—in which the actual world is transformed into a comic nightmare, reminding us a little oddly of a Disney cartoon. The nightmare is in Alceste's mind and the contrast between his distorted outlook and unreasonable behaviour and the humdrum world in which he lives makes him at once a comic and a moving

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figure. Our response to this passage and indeed to the whole play is a balance between two impulses which superficially appear to exclude one another—the impulse to laugh at Alceste's absurdity and the impulse to pity the obvious waste of his gifts. This is the proper response to comedy. For comedy is a continual oscillation between tragedy and farce, between what one writer has recently called the *vie tragique* and the *vie frivole*. It is in no sense a mingling of two different emotions. The emotions are welded into a fresh emotion which is different from either and which is the comic experience.

It is the failure to understand this that has led to many of the attempts to turn the *Misanthrope* into a tragedy. Ramon Fernandez, for example, has suggested that during the action of the play Alceste's character undergoes a radical change and that the man who departs for the desert as the curtain falls is no longer the same as the fiery reformer of Act I. The change is supposed to lie in the collapse of the will. It is an entertaining theory, but I can find no evidence for it in the text of the play. It is true that Alceste is constantly using expressions of great determination—'Je veux qu'on me distingue', 'Je veux m'y tenir'—but there is no genuine volition behind the words. When he declares early in the play:

> Je n'y puis plus tenir, j'enrage, et mon dessein
> Est de rompre en visière à tout le genre humain.

the 'Je n'y puis plus tenir' is already an admission of defeat and it leads to the usual outburst and the waste of nervous energy—*j'enrage*. This governs the next line and a half. *Mon dessein* is superficially an expression of purpose, but the aim is a negative one—complete rupture with society. The Alceste of Act V is identical with the Alceste of Act I. His *physical* exile is the logical outcome of the *psychological* exile—the retreat into a world of private mania—which is studied with such profound insight in the course of the play.

I stress this point because Fernandez' theory seems to me to rest on a misunderstanding of Molière's method of presentation in this play. Alceste is constructed partly by direct statement and partly by his action on other characters. Certain essential traits are presented in the opening scene and driven home by deliberate repetition all through the play. Once the outlines have been sketched, Molière proceeds to fill in the details. A series of impressions of Alceste as he appears to other characters are superimposed on one another. These impressions add to our knowledge both of Alceste and of the other characters. They are not always in agreement and sometimes, as we shall see, they qualify or contradict one another. This is a point of considerable importance and it is one of the things that force the reader to follow the dialogue with such minute care, to decide what weight must be attributed to the constant shift and change of tone.

This brings us to a consideration of Philinte's role. In all his greatest plays, with the exception of *Dom Juan*, Molière uses a well-defined pattern. His comic characters are paired off with the *honnêtes hommes*, the apostles of reason and moderation who are

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properly thought to represent the dramatist's own point of view. In the *École des femmes* we have Arnolphe and Chrysalde, in *Tartuffe* Orgon and Cléante, and in this play Alceste and Philinte. In one of the central passages Philinte declares:

> Il faut, parmi le monde, une vertu traitable;
> A force de sagesse on peut être blâmable;
> La parfaite raison fuit toute extrémité,
> Et veut que l'on soit sage avec sobriété.
> Cette grande roideur des vertus des vieux âges
> Heurte trop notre siècle et les communs usages;
> Elle veut aux mortels trop de perfection:
> Il faut fléchir au temps sans obstination,
> Et c'est une folie à nulle autre seconde
> De vouloir se mêler de corriger le monde.
> J'observe, comme vous, cent choses tous les jours,
> Qui pourraient mieux aller, prenant un autre cours;
> Mais, quoi qu'à chaque pas je puisse voir paraître,
> En courroux, comme vous, on ne me voit point être;
> Je prends tout doucement les hommes comme ils sont,
> J'accoutume mon âme à souffrir ce qu'ils font;
> Et je crois qu'à la cour, de même qu'à la ville,
> Mon flegme est philosophe autant que votre bile.

We recognize this passage, which recalls Cléante's plea for *une dévotion* which is *humaine* and *traitable,* as the familiar statement of Molière's positives. It is also a good example of the patterned movement of his verse. It is not a mere catalogue of 'the great abstractions'. There is life and warmth in his *sagesse, parfaite raison* and *sobriété.* They have behind them centuries of European civilization which is vividly felt. The *roideur des vertus des vieux âges* underlines the peculiar and disabling rigidity of Alceste's outlook and, at the same time, reflects a delicate appreciation of the graciousness of contemporary civilization which exists in spite of human imperfection. The passage closes on a personal note; precept merges into practice and one becomes aware of the urbanity and good sense of the civilized man. Philinte's tone is intended to act as a foil to Alceste's, to moderate his transports. When Alceste cries

> Et parfois il me prend des mouvements soudains
> De fuir dans un désert l'approche des humains.

Philinte replies:

> Mon Dieu, des moeurs du temps mettons-nous moins en peine,
> Et faisons un peu grâce à la nature humaine . . .

The sharp *soudains-humains* creates a sense of physical constriction and the relief provided by *peine-humaine* is palpable. The *grâce* and the *douceur* prolong the process on the logical plane. It is not without significance, however, that Philinte's attempts to moderate Alceste's transports are seldom successful. The very gentleness of

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tone seems to heighten his exasperation and he reserves some of his bitterest shafts for his friend. In these exchanges his tactics vary and he is decidedly *rusé*. When he retorts:

> Mais ce flegme, Monsieur, qui raisonne si bien,
> Ce flegme pourra-t-il ne s'échauffer de rien?

raisonne is balanced against *s'échauffer*. He feels instinctively that *flegme* puts the brake on his *emportement* and he tries to discredit it by suggesting that it is an excuse for tolerating injustice. There is a curious eagerness to brush aside obstacles. The verse stumbles and almost comes to a halt over the repeated *flegme*, then moves breathlessly forward to the word *s'échauffer* which is sufficient to set the machinery of denunciation in motion.

'Je sais, he begins with icy politeness in another place,

> Je sais que vous parlez, Monsieur, le mieux du monde;
> En beaux raisonnements vous abondez toujours;
> Mais vous perdez le temps et tous vos beaux discours.
> La raison, pour mon bien, veut que je me retire:
> Je n'ai pas sur ma langue un assez grand empire;
> De ce que je dirais je ne répondrais pas,
> Et je me jetterais cent choses sur les bras.

In order to keep up the appearance of rational behaviour, he pretends that his proposal to retire to the desert is a reasoned one, but there is a world of difference between the *beaux raisonnements* attributed to Philinte and Alceste's *raison*. 'Reason' ceases to be universal and becomes a private and very misleading label that he attaches to the demon which is driving him into the desert. The last three lines are double-edged. It is because he is unreasonable and not because society is unreasonable that he is likely to find himself in trouble if he remains where he is.

I have already spoken of the peculiar ambiguity of the play and of Philinte's place in it. In the *Misanthrope* there is a skilful modification of the pattern of Molière's comedies which becomes more subtle and more varied. Although Philinte is certainly Molière's spokesman in many places and certainly helps to provide the background of reason and sanity which contributes largely to the poise of the play, his role is a shifting one. We do not feel, as we do with Cléante, that the whole of the play is behind his words and the explanation is to be found in Éliante's observations on Alceste in Act IV, Sc. i:

> Dans ses façons d'agir il est fort singulier;
> Mais j'en fais, je l'avoue, un cas particulier,
> Et la sincérité dont son âme se pique
> A quelque chose en soi de noble et d'héroïque.
> C'est une vertu rare au siècle d'aujourd'hui,
> Et je la voudrais voir partout comme chez lui.

Éliante is the only wholly sympathetic character in the play. It would not be accurate to say that she represents Molière's own

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point of view more completely than Philinte, but her role is of the first importance. In the *Misanthrope,* as in *Tartuffe,* Molière felt the need of two spokesmen; but the function of Éliante and Philinte goes beyond that of Dorine and Cléante. Dorine and Cléante complete one another, but Éliante qualifies the role of Philinte and it is this that gives the play a mellowness which is unique in Molière's work. For Éliante's words display a fresh attitude towards the comic hero. Arnolphe, Harpagon and Orgon (in spite of his final conversion to a *dévotion traitable*) are and remain completely unsympathetic; but Alceste awakens the sympathies of the audience to a degree which is exceptional in seventeenth-century and indeed in all comedy.

Éliante minimises Alceste's peculiarities and by placing the emphasis on his 'rare virtue' she corrects Philinte. Alceste is not a buffoon in the same sense as Molière's other comic characters. There is always a foundation of good sense behind his criticisms and, in spite of their exaggeration, this is true of his attacks on convention. He tries like all Molière's comic characters to impose the values of a private world on society, but his cult of sincerity is not subversive in the way that Arnolphe's theories about the education of women and Orgon's religious mania are. In the scene where Oronte's sonnet is criticised, which is significantly placed immediately after the exposition of the principal themes of the play in Scene i, his good taste and sound judgment obviously compare favourably with Philinte's flattery.[7] There is a less obvious but more impressive example towards the end of the play when, after commiserating with Alceste on the loss of his lawsuit, Philinte proceeds to expound the virtues of his own philosophy:

> Tous ces défauts humains nous donnent dans la vie
> Des moyens d'exercer notre philosophie;
> C'est le plus bel emploi que trouve la vertu;
> Et si de probité tout était revêtu,
> Si tous les coeurs étaient francs, justes et dociles,
> La plupart des vertus nous seraient inutiles . . .

Philinte's logic may be unexceptionable, but is not the attitude that he is defending in danger of becoming abstract and unreal? Is there not a gap between life and thought, a gap which can only be closed by the more human and more generous approach of Éliante? Does it not overlook the fact that the ordinary man is not a mere logician and that 'the exercise of our philosophy' cannot impose order on the tangled feelings and desires which Molière perceived as clearly as Racine? The neat maxims which appealed so much to the reason-

[7]For a more orthodox interpretation of Philinte's role and of this scene, see Michaud's chapter on the play in *les Luttes de Molière* (Paris, 1925). Although I do not feel able to accept this interpretation, I should like to commend Michaud's writings on Molière which are the best kind of literary scholarship and are of great value to the literary critic.

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able seventeenth century are useless in solving the central problem of the play—the conflict between what Gutkind calls, with true Teutonic violence, 'die leichtfertige, saloppe, kokett schnippische, junge Witwe und Alceste, der schwerblutige, in seine Leidenschaft verbissene und um seine Liebe ringende Mann.[8]'

The conclusion seems to me to be unmistakable. In this play Molière criticises his own standards. The urbanity and moderation of the *honnête homme* are felt to be insufficient. When Éliante speaks of 'quelque chose en soi de noble et d'héroïque', she is referring to the potentialities of Alceste's character; but these potentialities are prevented from realizing themselves by his lack of balance and his impatience of all restraint. His virtues are converted into negation, into the *haines vigoureuses* of one passage and the *immortelle haine* of another; his violence leads him away from the world of common experience into a world of private mania where he thunders against wildly exaggerated abuses in the void. This makes him a comic figure, but it is the consciousness of his potential virtues and of his profound humanity which gives the play its peculiar resonance.

IV.

The triple conflict represents the three points of contact between Alceste and society. The continual switching from one to the other and back again enables Molière to present both Alceste and society in a perpetually changing light until, as the play moves towards its climax, the three blend and give it its cumulative force. The direct conflict with convention underlines Alceste's absurdity and prevents comedy from turning into tragedy; the lawsuit redresses the balance and seems at times to justify his violence; the affair with Célimène is the richest and most serious of all and in a way contains them both. Those critics are right who have stressed its importance. Alceste's rage over convention and his lawsuit are the points at which he separates himself from his fellow men and his love affair the point at which he rejoins them. It stands for normality; it is the side of his character by which (in Mauriac's words) 'il nous devient fraternel'. 'Je m'étonne, pour moi', remarks Philinte

> Je m'étonne, pour moi, qu'étant, comme il le semble,
> Vous et le genre humain si fort brouillés ensemble,
> Malgré tout ce qui peut vous le rendre odieux,
> Vous ayez pris chez lui ce qui charme vos yeux;
> Et ce qui me surprend encore davantage,
> C'est cet étrange choix où votre coeur s'engage.
> La sincère Éliante a du penchant pour vous,
> La prude Arsinoé vous voit d'un oeil fort doux:
> Cependant à leurs voeux votre âme se refuse,
> Tandis qu'en ses liens Célimène l'amuse,
> De qui l'humeur coquette et l'esprit mèdisant
> Semble si fort donner dans les moeurs d'à présent.

[8] *Op. cit.* p. 125.

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Alceste replies at once, with his curious mixture of arrogance and perspicacity, that he has no illusions about the shortcomings of Célimène:

> Non, l'amour que je sens pour cette jeune veuve
> Ne ferme point mes yeux aux défauts qu'on lui treuve,
> Et je suis, quelque ardeur qu'elle m'ait pu donner,
> Le premier à les voir, comme à les condamner.
> Mais, avec tout cela, quoi que je puisse faire,
> Je confesse mon faible, elle a l'art de me plaire;
> J'ai beau voir ses défauts, et j'ai beau l'en blâmer,
> En dépit qu'on en ait, elle se fait aimer;
> Sa grâce est la plus forte, et sans doute ma flamme
> De ces vices du temps pourra purger son âme.

Célimène's importance is twofold. She is the complete representative of the society that Alceste and through him Molière is attacking. When some of her retainers tell Alceste that he should blame her and not them for the spiteful remarks that she is making about acquaintances and friends, he retorts acutely:

> Non, morbleu! c'est à vous; et vos ris complaisants
> Tirent de son esprit tous ces traits médisants.

Part of his problem is to 'convert' Célimène, to carry her away from the vicious circle in which she lives; but the problem remains unsolved because of Alceste's eccentricity, because he can only convert her by transporting her into the world of his private mania, by carrying her off with him into the 'desert'. What distinguishes him from Molière's other characters is an extraordinary insight into his own feelings. There are moments when he suddenly forgets his grievances against society, drops the tone of violent denunciation and sees himself as he really is—not a reformer, but a man sadly perplexed by his passion for a woman who is unworthy of him. It is at such moments that we become aware of his immense superiority over the brittle society which is trying to laugh him out of criticisms which are felt to be a threat to it:

> PHILINTE
> Pour moi, si je n'avais qu'à former des désirs,
> La cousine Éliante aurait tous mes soupirs.
> Son coeur, qui vous estime, est solide et sincère,
> Et ce choix plus conforme était mieux votre affaire.
> ALCESTE
> Il est vrai: ma raison me le dit chaque jour;
> Mais la raison n'est pas ce qui règle l'amour.

In the last two lines *raison* is used in its normal sense which is not the sense of

> La raison, pour mon bien, veut que je me retire.

Célimène stands for the tangled feelings and desires which, as I have already suggested, the seventeenth century tried in vain to

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enclose in its neat formulas. It is at this point that the 'systems' of both Alceste and Philinte break down. The obstinate fanaticism of the one and the philosophical maxims of the other are alike impotent to solve the problems of life. For in this play Molière explores regions in which conventional formulas have no validity and the insight with which he does so gives the *Misanthrope* its exceptional place in French comedy. Nor must we overlook the irony of *solide et sincère* which is echoed later in the play by Alceste's

> Enfin, quoi qu'il en soit, et sur quoi qu'on se fonde,
> Vous trouvez des raisons pour souffrir tout le monde . . .

Alceste, Célimène and Éliante form a triangle. Alceste places himself at a point outside society; Célimène is entirely absorbed in it; Éliante occupies an intermediate position. She is of society, but is wholly uncontaminated by it. *Alceste's contact with the world of common experience is seen to be intermittent.* He is continually rebounding from its polished surface into the world of his private mania. The victory of either Alceste or Célimène in the tug-of-war would fail to solve the problem. The only solution, the only way back to the norm of sanity and common sense for Alceste lies in Éliante and he refuses it. This is true of nearly all the characters in their different ways. They are all looking for something *solide et sincère,* for some philosophy on which to base their lives, but they meet with disappointment at every turn. Convention, justice and love prove equally hollow and unreal and they suddenly find themselves face to face with the void.

A large part of the play is thus taken up with the tug-of-war between Alceste and Célimène as each tries to draw the other into his or her own sphere. Célimène is shallow and frivolous, but she too is dimly conscious of her shortcomings and it is only because she is not beyond redemption that she provides Alceste with an adequate foil. From time to time the glitter and polish of the exchanges between them are disturbed by a deeper note:

> ALCESTE
> Mais moi, que vous blâmez de trop de jalousie,
> Qu'ai-je de plus qu'eux tous, Madame, je vous prie?
>
> CELIMENE
> Le bonheur de savoir que vous êtes aimé.

This note only occurs at rare intervals with Célimène. Her normal tone bears a marked similarity to Philinte's. She answers Alceste's overwrought declarations either in a mood of light banter or with mild surprise which lowers the tension:

> ALCESTE
> Morbleu! faut-il que je vous aime!
> Ah! que si de vos mains je rattrape mon coeur,
> Je bénirai le Ciel de ce rare bonheur!
> Je ne le cèle pas, je fais tout mon possible

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A rompre de ce coeur l'attachement terrible;
Mais mes plus grands efforts n'ont rien fait jusqu'ici
Et c'est pour mes péchés que je vous aime ainsi.

CELIMENE

Il est vrai, votre ardeur est pour moi sans seconde.

ALCESTE

Oui, je puis là-dessus défier tout le monde.
Mon amour ne se peut concevoir, et jamais
Personne n'a, Madame, aimé comme je fais.

CELIMENE

En effet, la méthode en est toute nouvelle,
Car vous aimez les gens pour leur faire querelle;
Ce n'est qu'en mots fâcheux qu'éclate votre ardeur,
Et l'on n'a jamais vu un amour si grondeur.

ALCESTE

Mais il ne tient qu'à vous que son chagrin[9] ne passe.
A tous nos démêlés coupons chemin, de grace,
Parlons à coeur ouvert, et voyons d'arrêter . . .

This illustrates very well the constant change of tone. Alceste begins in a mood of deadly seriousness. The turns and twists of the dialogue reflect the turns and twists of the trapped animal—'the heavy blooded man absorbed by his passion and fighting for his love'—to escape the *attachement terrible,* and recalls ironically Philinte's

Cependant à leurs voeux votre âme se refuse,
Tandis qu'en ses liens Célimène l'*amuse*.

For Alceste's struggle is no laughing matter, and the gravity of Célimène's

Il est vrai, votre ardeur est pour moi sans seconde

shows that she is impressed in spite of herself, is faced with something which is outside her experience. But when Alceste continues in the same tone, her mood changes and she comments lightheartedly on the 'new method 'of making love. The reference to his notorious ill-humour not only lowers the tension of the scene, it brings Alceste back to his usual level—the comic figure who is at odds with society. The relief, however, is only momentary, and the scene closes with something that sounds like a cry for mercy. 'Coupons chemin, de grâce'—Alceste's arrogance vanishes and he knows that he has been defeated in the encounter.

MARTIN TURNELL.

[To be concluded]

[9]This use of the word *chagrin* illustrates the way in which, as I have already said, Alceste's love affair 'contains' the conflicts with convention and justice.

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OBJECTIONS TO A REVIEW OF 'LITTLE GIDDING'

The Editors have received the following communication:

> La vostra nominanza è color d'erba,
> che viene e va, e quei la discolora,
> per cui ell'esce della terra acerba.

THE review of *Little Gidding* in the last number of *Scrutiny* was an exposition, almost a paraphrase, but hardly a criticism, and crossed, I think, the line which separates the 'abeyance of the critical function' from its favourable exercise. Surely any reviewer should suspect his reactions when he can find nothing better to say than what his poet has already said better? Perhaps the last paragraph represented a hasty concession to the necessity of making some objective remark about the work. But even here, alas, the question raised was 'outside the range of this review'. That gives me a pretext to codify some disturbing impressions—not faked up *ad hoc*—about Mr. Eliot's recent verse.

Mr. Harding drew a distinction between the emotional and the intellectual use of intellectual material. One between emotional and intellectual material, each used intellectually, is more illuminating. Mr. Eliot used to contemplate the conditions, of mind or affairs, which he wished to represent, from the outside, personifying such of himself as was relevant in some as it were dramatic character. He then represented what he saw by consciously assembling fragments of it intense enough to express all he left out. In this way he created poems both evocative and passionate. But at least since *Burnt Norton* he has stopped being satisfied with the mere representation of conditions in isolation. He now finds them only properly understood or indeed significant when placed in a framework of more important and permanent truth. This is a natural development from earlier work obsessed by the meaninglessness of autonomous mood. But the significance of such qualifications of a condition can only be properly apprehended intellectually, syllogistically. Certainly they can be suffused with emotion, but the raw material is plain, logical argument. Now Mr. Eliot's general method, of assembling intense fragments, has not changed. Since, however, many aspects of the conditions as he has come to represent them are thus intellectual, many of his fragments also must be intellectual. Furthermore they must be sufficiently powerful to stand the pressure generated by the emotional fragments.

His only hope of fulfilling this last necessity would be to feel what he thinks as intensely as he feels what he feels. Then the intellectual material would go about with him as constantly as the

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emotional and, like that, would pick up the diverse associations and occurrences which somehow make poetry. With certain exceptions, however, it has not done so. It lacks body, is thin. As for method, there is sometimes the crass, palpable expression of it which Mr. Harding notes at the beginning of section III of *Little Gidding*. In themselves such parts escape both censure and praise, except in so far as one may be interested in the skilful arrangement of unimportant rhythms and Mr. Eliot's personal re-distribution of emphasis among familiar arguments. But he is seldom so uncompromising with the blatancy of direct statement. Usually he resorts to symbols. But, since his intellectual material is not felt enough to be constantly with him and with the whole of him, it has insufficient background and body to produce spontaneous symbols. His symbols have to be thought up and clapped on. Again it is a matter of opinion: I myself cannot believe that these recurrent children in foliage, this silent music, these still dances, these gardens, these roses and yews which have their moments, these flames, that eternal wild thyme unseen and the useful, the universally adaptable, the good old sea, which figures so largely in the similes of our island race, are genuine and necessary expressions of a meaning. They are not existent enough and they are too uniform. They are a poeticising device, a private code, whose cyphers are often determined by the obsolete emotional associations attached to certain words in poetic convention. Kings at nightfall, for instance, really mean nothing; 'king' is a nice, emotive word; so is 'nightfall': that's all, that's all, that's all. Premiers at question-time would be more moving. Kings now can only impinge forcefully on a mind which is playing literary chess. Mr. Eliot has even succumbed to the unselfconscious use of old phrases like 'the world's end'; of clichés like 'the enigma of the fever chart', 'transient beauty', 'worshippers of the machine'. Nothing is gained by such paraphrasing. The original meaning's effect is not widened but confined, forced into the compass of a stock-response. Often the meaning is lost; often it does not seem worth finding. Secondary effects of this artificiality are preciousness, disappearance of verbal evocativeness, vagueness and a continual groping after the elusive, with the one authentic word slipping through the enunciation. Finally the straining after effect causes an occasional portentousness, as though Mr. Eliot were promulgating, rather than writing, verse: see the opening of sections I and V of *The Dry Salvages*.

The melancholy of the failure is in the contrast with the successes. The most noteworthy success is the second part of section II of *Little Gidding*, applied to which Mr. Harding's praises are accurate. There are others: *Burnt Norton*, most of section III, section IV; *East Coker*, most of section I, section II; *The Dry Salvages*, section II and section IV. They are all seen or felt; they are vivid, real, not existing in an impossible rose-shot, children-tinkled haze. Their material, in fact, is emotional, whereas the failures, as I have tried to show, are in attempts to use intellectual material.

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The unevenness and lack of homogeneity in these four poems from *Burnt Norton* onwards are therefore the result of disequilibrium in the author's feelings. If Mr. Eliot's achievements were not so great and his seriousness not beyond question I should use the term 'insincerity' to describe the general effect.

R. N. HIGINBOTHAM.

REFLECTIONS ON THE ABOVE

MR. HIGINBOTHAM disagrees with D. W. Harding's critical estimate of *Little Gidding*: that is what he means when, ironically quoting me, he speaks of an 'abeyance of the critical function'. And his manner of expressing his disagreement commits him, I think, to an indefensibly restricted view of the ways in which that function may be performed. 'Surely', he asks, 'any reviewer should suspect his reactions when he can find nothing better to say than what his poet has already said better?' To bring out how much better the poet has said it is, of course, the whole point and the conscious critical purpose of Harding's elucidation, and that such elucidation has its essential part in the critical function where *Little Gidding* and the companion poems are concerned Mr. Higinbotham's own criticism serves, I think, to bring out, though the service this time is unintentional. (And Mr. Higinbotham's views on Eliot, as a friend remarked to me, are probably shared by many people).

A value-judgment can't, we all know, be demonstratively enforced; the critic can only attempt to help other readers to an approach by which, freed from inappropriate expectations and preconceptions and adverted as to the kind of thing they have in front of them, they will be able to *take* the poem—take it for what it is: the judging goes with the taking. Mr. Higinbotham finds the meaning of *Little Gidding* so obvious that he can't believe (one gathers) that any reader a critic need bother about will be grateful for such an elucidation as Harding's, and this alone would lead us to doubt the grounds of Mr. Higinbotham's confidence ('what the poet has already said better') that he understands well enough what the poet has said. He goes on, of course, to complain that Harding leaves unanswered, having raised it, an important question about the working of the poem. And it is true that if Harding had been able to find the time, and had claimed the space, to elaborate that account of the working which the elucidation demands for its completion, his readers (or most of them) would have found even more cause for gratitude. But the reviewer of an interesting and complex work doesn't, in proposing for his review a limited scope, need to plead the pressure of war-time employments. There have been

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before in *Scrutiny* relevant discussions of Eliot's poetic methods, and no one who has read Harding's examination of *Burnt Norton* in his review of *Collected Poems* 1908-1935 (see *Scrutiny* for September, 1936) is likely to suppose that when he pronounced the question about Eliot's use of intellectual materials to be 'outside the range' of his review of *Little Gidding* it was because of any uncertainty as to how he would proceed to answer it.

Unfortunately he hasn't been able to contribute to this number of *Scrutiny* at all, and has had reluctantly to renounce the opportunity offered by Mr. Higinbotham's letter of going further with the discussion of *Little Gidding* and of the problems it raises. I myself have had no chance of discussing things with him; he hasn't seen my comments on Mr. Higinbotham's criticism of Eliot's poetry, or been consulted about them, and what follows must be taken as coming from me, and me alone.

Mr. Higinbotham, offering to correct and supplement Harding, gives his own account of the relation between the 'intellectual material' and the 'emotional' in these late poems of Eliot's. I am bound to say that in so doing he seems to me to show a complete failure to recognize the kind of organization the poems present, and an accompanying failure to appreciate the distinctive genius of the poet. Early in the first paragraph of his argument (the second of the letter) he pulls us up with: 'But at least since *Burnt Norton* he has stopped being satisfied with the mere representation of conditions in isolation'. It seems quite plain from the general context that we are not to take 'at least' as meant to qualify seriously the implication that up to *Burnt Norton* the poet *was* satisfied with such mere representation. This implication will, I know, have surprised others as much as it surprised me. For some account of the way in which, from the first of the *Ash-Wednesday* sequence onwards, Eliot's poems, so far from being preoccupied with 'conditions in isolation' or 'autonomous mood', are preoccupied with establishing, in a constructive exploration of experience, the apprehension of a reality in relation to which life in time has what meaning it can be made to yield, I may perhaps be allowed to refer back to *Scrutiny* for Summer last year. What Mr. Higinbotham is constating is the notable presence in *Burnt Norton* of 'intellectual materials' used, as the review of *Little Gidding* puts it, intellectually. He thinks that any going beyond 'the mere representation of conditions in isolation' must depend upon such a presence—'But the significance of such qualifications of a condition can only be properly apprehended intellectually, syllogistically'.

In taking over Harding's phrase, 'intellectual materials', Mr. Higinbotham, unconsciously and significantly, gives its meaning a shift into another plane. Harding, in talking of 'materials', is thinking, not of something behind the text, but of what lies on the page before us, to be taken up by us, in the re-creative process of reading, into the organism of the realized poem. For Mr. Higinbotham the 'materials' are what we deduce to be behind the text, they are in Mr. Eliot and are what he tries, with very incomplete

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success, to make poetry out of. Or perhaps, it would be better to say that they are what were, on a kind of inner workman's bench, *before* him. A concomitant of this shift is the curious account we are offered of the relation between the two postulated kinds of 'material', the emotional and the intellectual ('each used intellectually'). The passage quoted in my last paragraph continues:

> 'Certainly they can be suffused with emotion, but the raw material is plain, logical argument. Now Mr. Eliot's general method, of assembling intense fragments, has not changed. Since, however, many aspects of the conditions as he has come to represent them are thus intellectual, many of his fragments also must be intellectual. Furthermore they must be sufficiently powerful to stand the pressure generated by the emotional fragments'.

In this way Mr. Higinbotham faces the poet with a very difficult —in fact, an insoluble—problem. Here are the two different stuffs, the separate rolls or sheets (so to speak), from which fragments have to be selected to go into the poem. The emotional stuff is 'live'—poetically active, and the fragments carry with them into the poem a charge derived from the context from which they have been taken. In this way, though in itself non-poetical, the intellect (for clearly we have to explain the 'intellectually' of 'emotional and intellectual material, each used intellectually' by correlating it with the 'consciously assembled' of the sentence I am on the point of quoting) can work to poetic effect—'He then represented what he saw by consciously assembling fragments of it intense enough to express all he left out. In this way he created poems both evocative and passionate'. But what can the intellect do with the intellectual stuff, the chosen fragments of which can carry from their context, of its nature poetically inert, no charge with them?

Just how Mr. Higinbotham conceives of this intellectual stuff, this 'raw material' of 'plain, logical argument', I can't figure to myself convincingly. Nor do I understand the relation between thinking and feeling implied here:

> 'His only hope of fulfilling this last necessity [that the intellectual fragments should 'be sufficiently powerful to stand the pressure generated by the emotional fragments'] would be to feel what he thinks as intensely as he feels what he feels. Then the intellectual material would go about with him as constantly as the emotional, and, like that, would pick up the diverse associations which somehow make poetry'.

For the essential argument makes 'thinking' a matter pertaining to an abstract realm that is insulated from concrete experience, though the intellect is somehow able, across the insulating boundaries, to take cognizance of 'conditions' outside, and place them 'in a framework of more important and permanent truth'—a framework the significance of which, one gathers, 'can only be properly apprehended intellectually, syllogistically'.

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I shouldn't myself like to have to try and explain to a psychologist or a philosopher my own notions about the relations between 'thinking' and 'feeling', but my acquaintance with poetry as a literary critic is enough to convince me that I am justified in pronouncing Mr. Higinbotham's account, in so far as one can gather it, inadequate to the facts. A literary critic can hardly fail to have given a great deal of attention to the problems raised by those two terms, 'thinking' and 'feeling', in company. He certainly can't have failed to do so if he has grappled with Eliot's later poetry, for there the poet's essential preoccupations entail, inseparably, a conscious preoccupation with those problems.

But the problem of inducing intellectual material to 'pick up the diverse associations and occurrences that somehow make poetry', so that fragments can go duly charged into the poem with a chance of holding their own against emotional fragments, coming from an emotional context, was provided by Mr. Higinbotham. It is only if you suppose the poet to have been faced with it that you can judge him to have been beaten by it. The passages that Harding instances as exemplifying intellectual materials used intellectually are (I concur in his judgment) poetry because of their context, the poem as a whole—or rather, the sequence as a whole; because, that is, they belong to a vital organization. When Harding says the materials are used intellectually his appositional clause makes quite plain what he means: 'in literal statement which is to be understood literally'. That is, they demand to be taken as if we were for the moment reading a prose treatise, moral or philosophical. As if—but they have a force and a life that no treatise could have given them. Their context, instead of being one of statement and argument, is one that evokes concretely the living experience from which they emerge as the index and summary. We don't feel them as a matter of abstract thinking about or of; the presence in them of the concrete they focus and transmit is too immediate and commanding—if, that is, we have understood the organization and made ourselves capable of taking the poem. What in fact this poetry renders concretely is the exploratory process in which experience is ordered into significance—a process a good deal more inward and organically complex than that envisaged by Mr. Higinbotham as being operated by the intellect on 'conditions in isolation' ('He now finds them only properly understood or indeed significant when placed in a framework of more important and permanent truth'). The way in which, in this poetry, intellectual formulation emerges from the experiential matrix clearly has general bearings, and a literary critic can't help believing that those whose business is with intellectual formulation, and those—psychologists or philosophers—whose business is to be interested in the nature of thought, must, if they achieve the approach, find themselves notably indebted to the genius of the poet.

Failing to achieve the approach Mr. Higinbotham finds, not only that the passages of intellectual material are 'thin' and 'lack body', but that, since this material, not being felt enough by the

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poet, 'has insufficient background and body to produce spontaneous symbols', his 'symbols have to be thought up and clapped on'. In this way a large proportion of the other-than-intellectual material is dismissed as not 'genuine and necessary expression of a meaning':

> 'They are not existent enough and they are too uniform. They are a poeticizing device, a private code, whose cyphers are often determined by the obsolete emotional associations attached to certain words in poetic convention. Kings at nightfall, for instance, really mean nothing; "king" is a nice, emotive word; so is "nightfall": that's all, that's all, that's all. Premiers at question-time would be more moving'.

This illustration brings home pretty forcibly with what insistence Mr. Higinbotham reads the poem as an assemblage of fragments. He not only misses the wider and more recondite organization; he ignores the connexions that for any reader, one would have thought, lie obvious on the page in view. Here is the phrase he objects to restored to its immediate context:

> If I think, again, of this place,
> And of people, not wholly commendable,
> Of no immediate kin or kindness,
> But some of peculiar genius,
> All touched by a common genius,
> United in the strife which divided them;
> If I think of a king at nightfall,
> Of three men, and more, on the scaffold
> And a few who died forgotten
> In other places, here and abroad,
> And of one who died blind and quiet,
> Why should we celebrate
> These dead men more than the dying?

The 'place', explicitly enough, is Little Gidding. The associated 'people', plainly, are of the seventeenth century, and so, equally plainly, are the figures in the rest of the sentence, and that one of them should be a king can surely be more naturally and convincingly explained than by invoking a blind need in the poet to clutch at a worn poetical property. These are particular figures of the past that have lodged in the poet's imagination—historic figures very relevant to the theme of the poem. And it will have been noted that the whole 'If I think' passage leads up to the question:

> Why should we celebrate
> These dead men more than the dying?

Even if for a reader who can't take the passage in its place in the whole organization the question has nothing like its due force, the explicit intention as given locally makes Mr. Higinbotham's reaction look odd:

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It is not to ring the bell backward
Nor is it an incantation
To summon the spectre of a Rose.
etc.

For the reader who has, from *Burnt Norton* on, taken the essential organization and development, the question has behind it that mercilessly resourceful process by which human and historic time is de-realized into a dismaying relativity and his habit-confident sense of present and past and reality routed—the process so disturbingly furthered, in *The Dry Salvages*, by that symbolic and evocative use of the sea to which Mr. Higinbotham (in what looks to me like mere petulance) objects. Possessed by this consciousness of evanescence and insignificance, of not-being, why indeed should we celebrate these dead men more than the living (the 'dying')—why should we attribute to them more reality?

The force of the positive answer indicated by Harding is conditioned by the effect of the negative or solvent process. I can imagine it's being said that it depends upon it too much—that the poet creates a vacuum which the duly 'conditioned' reader is drawn in to fill too readily with the hints provided. But from the outset a positive creative process has accompanied the sapping, unsettling and dissolving—a process any account of which must be mainly an enlargement of Harding's account of the 'creation of concepts' in *Burnt Norton*. I won't attempt such an enlargement here, or recapitulate what I offered last year in the Summer *Scrutiny*. I will merely suggest that Mr. Higinbotham ponders the relations in *Burnt Norton* between the proposition,

Time past and time future
What might have been and what has been
Point to one end, which is always present,

the imagery of 'our first world', 'reality', 'the still point', 'the dance' 'consciousness', 'the form' and 'the pattern', and tries to grasp what kind of co-operation between all these (and a great deal else) is *intended*—a co-operation of which we are given a kind of clinching *résumé* in the closing section, with its culminating

Quick now, here, now, always—.

That he has not really tried is sufficiently shown, I think, by his dismissing 'transient beauty' in section III as a *cliché*—a reaction as betrayingly arbitrary as his reaction to 'kings at nightfall'. And what would he substitute for 'world's end' in *Little Gidding*? Does he perhaps think that 'end of the world' means the same thing? If Eliot is to be judged guilty of a weakness for *clichés*, then no poet who ever wrote can escape conviction. Of course, what we have here is not criticism, but a patent expression of that curiously strong feeling which pervades the note as a whole. I remarked on this feeling to a friend to whom I showed the note and he replied. 'I think a possible explanation is that he's one of the many people

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who like their poetry miserable. The passages he notes for praise bear this out. After all, Eliot's earlier work was bound to have a strong appeal for [people who go to poetry to indulge their sense of grievance against things], and I can see that they would feel it is a final outrage if *he* started turning happy on them'.

I ask Mr. Higinbotham to believe that it is with my eye on the 'many people' that I quote this. In the general bearing of his comment my friend was certainly right, and the point he makes is an important one; it calls attention to another aspect of the difficulty of Eliot's later poetry. This poetry is difficult by reason of the discipline of self-knowledge and readjustment it imposes. To deal with one's miseries in the manner indicated above is comparatively easy, and it offers by way of satisfaction (at various possible levels) a sense of superiority and a licence for a measure of self-congratulation. It involves too the temptation to protect oneself from effort with sanctioned and respectable *clichés* of feeling and attitude. Eliot's later poetry exacts of the reader who proposes to feel that he has mastered it a far more difficult emotional and moral readjustment.

Such in fact is the demand under this head made by *Little Gidding* that few readers will be quick to feel that they are in a position to render anything like a final account of what, for them, the poem is and does. Harding's account seems to me admirable—admirable in positive definition and admirable in its patent awareness of the problems of concrete determination it leaves the assenting reader with. A critical account of any poetry can only point, or draw a line round. It must always be left to each reader to grasp for himself what is concretely presented. In the case of *Little Gidding* the grasping must be a matter, not only of much attentive re-reading of the whole sequence, but of meditation and disciplined self-searching. That what we are offered is worth these, and in what general ways, ought, I think, to be plain to any qualified reader of poetry who has seriously attempted the approach. But he will be a rare reader who does not go on feeling that he must re-read the whole, and question his experience, again and yet again. 'Detachment (distinguished from indifference)'—yes, one in a sense knows well enough what one ought to have there, though the having will clearly be more than a matter of reading a poem attentively. 'For the man convinced of spiritual values life is a coherent pattern in which the ending has its due place and because it is part of a pattern, itself leads into the beginning': 'the present is able to take up, and even give added meaning to, the values of the past':—just what corresponding to these phrases one actually grasps is a question that, in the stock-taking with which a reading tries to complete itself, leads one back again and again to a re-reading. The poetry and the question—the questions—have to be lived with.

F. R. LEAVIS.

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BACON AND THE SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY DISSOCIATION OF SENSIBILITY[1]

THE last twenty or thirty years have seen a revolution in our attitudes towards the seventeenth century. To start with, we now know very much more about that period than was known a few decades ago. Whilst some historians have brought out the persistence of mediaeval modes of thought and action beyond the close of the mediaeval period, others have pushed back the beginnings of the Industrial Revolution and demonstrated a direct line of connexion between the commercial and industrial enterprise of Elizabethan and early Stuart times and the greater changes of the eighteenth century. And this increased knowledge of the economic life of the time has completely changed the picture of political development as drawn by the Whig historians—a picture in which the conflict between King and Parliament appeared simply as a struggle for civil and religious liberty. Indeed the reaction has gone so far that it is now fashionable to speak of the Civil War as nothing more than the necessary adjustment of political forms to those 'progressive' economic forces which had grown up within the husk of the old order. Even if we find that formula misleading in its excessive simplicity we do now recognize the part played by economic pressure, in various forms, not only in moulding the constitutional development of the century but in helping to shape its dominant philosophies.

But the revolution that I referred to has not been caused merely by an increase in knowledge. It is due primarily to a shift in evaluation intimately related to the needs and interests of the present. We can see this most clearly in recent literary criticism. Metaphysical poetry has become a living force, felt directly as one feels contemporary poetry; of the Elizabethan-Jacobean dramatists one or two, such as Jonson and Tourneur, have obtained something very different from the inert and qualified approval of the text-

[1]A paper read to the Cambridge English Club.

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books, whilst others, such as Beaumont and Fletcher, have slid quietly from their eminence; and the greatness of Shakespeare is estimated in terms radically different from those current forty years ago when Bradley published his *Shakespearean Tragedy*. These changes, and the reasons for them, are significant. The major change, however, is something that cannot be described purely in literary terms. The seventeenth century has long been recognized as marking in some ways the beginning of 'the modern world'. But the process is no longer felt as simple development, as unqualified progress. The literary splendours of the Shakespearean period are no longer explained solely in terms of the impingement of all that was new, free and 'progressive' in the Renaissance; they are seen as the result of Renaissance turbulence and intellectual eagerness working on traditional ways of thinking and feeling and evaluating, the reflexion of a tension that can be observed in every sphere of the national life. That fruitful tension could not last; the new triumphed over the old, and the Civil War and the Restoration mark the ending of an historical period. The modern reassessment of the seventeenth century is largely a recognition of what was lost as well as gained by the transition to the modern world—a transition that took place not only in the spheres of practical achievement and conscious intellect but in those more subtle and more profound modes of perceiving and feeling that underlie men's conscious philosophies and explicit attitudes, and that have become so ingrained and habitual that it is only by a deliberate effort of the intelligence that we can recognize them as *not* inevitable, absolute and unchanging, the permanent *donnés* of 'human nature': that is why they are best studied in our literature. It is as a contribution to our understanding of the seventeenth-century 'dissociation of sensibility'—from which, as Mr. Eliot remarked in his brilliantly suggestive essay, 'we have never recovered'—that I wish to consider some of the work of Francis Bacon.

I.

Bacon's claim to be *'buccinator novi temporis'*, accepted for three hundred years, is not likely to be disputed. He was the prophet, if he was not the founder, of modern scientific rationalism. Modern rationalism, of course, is not the only form that can be taken by the exercise of the reason. It is the exercise of reason towards a particular end in a particular way. The aim is the understanding and mastery of the material world; the method is a scrupulous examination of how things work and how they influence each other—what we now call the scientific method. Both aim and general method were defined by Bacon. The purpose of knowledge that he returns to repeatedly is 'the benefit and use of man', 'the endowment and benefit of man's life', 'the serious use of business and occasions'. The method proposed is 'a laborious and sober inquiry of truth', 'ascending from experiments to the invention of causes, and descending from causes to the invention of new

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experiments'; and he notes as 'the root of all error', 'too untimely a departure and too remote a recess from particulars'. And the scope of rational investigation is universal: 'For that nothing parcel of the world is denied to man's inquiry and invention'. These quotations from *The Advancement of Learning* (1605) sufficiently indicate the main directions of his thought.

We must, it is true, beware of exaggerating Bacon's *direct* influence on the development of modern science or of confounding him with a nineteenth-century Rationalist. Not only was he not himself an experimental scientist, he was either ignorant or contemptuous of the major scientific discoveries of his own time; and he was without a glimmer of perception of what was to be the supreme scientific achievement of the seventeenth century—the development of mathematical physics.[2] But his ignorance of science did not prevent him from clarifying the ideals that seventeenth-century scientists were to find congenial. Dr. Rudolph Metz, who stresses Bacon's rôle as propagandist for the new science, writes[3]:

> 'Like almost all representative Renaissance thinkers, he was inspired with the Faustian urge. In this context may be mentioned one of the most significant and impressive elements of his doctrine; whose motto is "Knowledge is power", and its aim the *regnum hominis*. It is the pragmatic utilitarianism of the Baconian philosophy which is here first and most adequately stated . . . For the first time the philosopher meets us not as a sedentary figure closeted away from the affairs of the world, not as a mere onlooker who seeks truth for its own sake, but as a being possessed by a passionate impulse to action, who places his knowledge at the service of practical ends and assigns to it as its greatest task the subjection of nature to the will of man . . . In this, Bacon's thought and feeling are entirely modern, and there is no vestige of mediaevalism left . . . . The science which is placed at the service of humanity has as its final aim technical mastery, which now supplants artistic culture. This shifting from art to technics represents, it seems to me, an important difference between early and late Renaissance thinking. Thus Bacon is one of the first to celebrate the coming of the technical age, and his doctrine is full of faith in future progress'.

The combination of 'the Faustian urge' and faith in progress with outstanding intellectual ability explains the respect, approaching veneration, felt for Bacon by the triumphant rationalists of the

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[2]Spedding gives an excellent summary of Bacon's ignorance of some of the more important aspects of scientific advance in his own day. See the collected *Works* (ed. Ellis, Spedding and Heath), Vol. III, pp. 510 ff. All page references are to this volume.

[3]In a valuable essay, 'Bacon's Part in the Intellectual Movement of his Time', in *Seventeenth-Century Studies Presented to Sir Herbert Grierson*.

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modern period. The early members of the Royal Society freely acknowledged their debt; and the Ode that Cowley contributed to Spratt's History of the Society (1667) is largely concerned to celebrate the champion of 'Philosophy' and 'the Mechanick way' against 'Authority'.

> From these and all long Errors of the way,
> In which our wandring Praedecessors went,
> And like th' old *Hebrews* many years did stray
> In Desarts but of small extent,
> *Bacon,* like *Moses,* led us forth at last,
> The barren Wilderness he past,
> Did on the very Border stand
> Of blest promis'd Land,
> And from the Mountains Top of his Exalted Wit,
> Saw it himself, and shew'd us it.

Voltaire, speaking for the conscious Enlightenment of the eighteenth century, declared that the *Novum Organum* was the scaffolding on which 'the new philosophy' had been built (*Lettres Philosophiques,* 12me. Lettre). A hundred years later, Macaulay acclaimed Bacon as 'the greatest of English philosophers'—not, it must be admitted, for strictly philosophical reasons, but because, as he remarked, 'two words form the key of the Baconian doctrine, Utility and Progress': 'Turn where we may, the trophies of that mighty intellect are full in view'.

What Macaulay's essay unconsciously serves to bring out is that Bacon was not only a directive force as a thinker. He was, in ways less obvious though intimately related to his philosophy, an early representative of that deeper change occurring in English life in the seventeenth century—a change in sensibility—to which I have referred. A short examination of Bacon's English prose style may help to reveal the partly unconscious habits of perceiving and feeling that underlie and give a particular tone to Bacon's own intellectual formulations and that, as the age of Utility and Progress advanced, were to become more and more 'normal'.

II.

Some important aspects of Bacon's style were described by two of his contemporaries, by Dr. Rawley, his chaplain and literary executor, and by Ben Jonson. In his short *Life* of Bacon Rawley wrote:

> 'In the composing of his books he did rather drive at masculine and clear expression than at any fineness or affectation of phrases, and would often ask if the meaning were expressed plainly enough, as being one that accounted words to be but subservient or ministerial to matter, and not the principal. And if his style were polite, it was because he would do no otherwise. Neither was he given to any light conceit, or descanting upon

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words, but did ever purposely and industriously avoid them; for he held such things to be but digressions or diversions from the scope intended, and to derogate from the weight and dignity of the style'.

Jonson's comment in *Discoveries* refers to Bacon's speeches, but it can be applied to his writings.

'Yet there happened in my time one noble speaker, who was full of gravity in his speaking. His language (where he could spare or pass by a jest) was nobly censorious. No man ever spake more neatly, more pressly, more weightily, or suffered less emptiness, less idleness, in what he uttered. No member of his speech but consisted of his own graces. His hearers could not cough, or look aside from him, without loss'.

Both Rawley and Jonson stress those elements in Bacon's style that make for a weighty and compact directness of meaning and that point forward to the 'mathematical plainness' commended by Spratt and cultivated by the members of the Royal Society. His packed and aphoristic manner can be studies in the *Essays*. But these are rather consciously mannered performances, which do not seem to me to deserve the high place assigned to them by convention. In *The Advancement of Learning* a more direct and lively interest gives a keener edge to the close texture of the prose. The following extracts are from the section on medicine.

'In the inquiry of diseases, they do abandon the cures of many, some as in their nature incurable, and others as past the period of cure; So that Sylla and the triumvirs never proscribed so many men to die, as they do by their ignorant edicts; whereof numbers do escape with less difficulty than they did in the Roman proscriptions. Therefore I will not doubt to note as a deficience, that they inquire not the perfect cures of many diseases, or extremities of diseases, but pronouncing them incurable do enact a law of neglect, and exempt ignorance from discredit'.

'But lest I grow to be more particular than is agreeable either to my intention or to proportion, I will conclude this part with the note of one deficience more, which seemeth to me of greatest consequence; which is, that the prescripts in use are too compendious to attain their end: for to my understanding, it is a vain and flattering opinion to think any medicine can be so sovereign or so happy, as that the receit or use of it can work any great effect upon the body of man. It were a strange speech which spoken, or spoken oft, should reclaim a man from a vice to which he were by nature subject. It is order, pursuit, sequence, and interchange of application, which is mighty in nature; which although it require more exact knowledge in prescribing and more precise obedience in observing, yet is recompensed with the magnitude of effects'.

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Such passages are characteristic, and they answer to the account given by Rawley and Jonson. But the account is not complete. Bacon was not only a learned and weighty writer, he was also an Elizabethan with an eye for the literary possibilities of the spoken idiom. His *History of the Reign of King Henry VII* is full of phrases that one would not be surprised to meet in Nashe,[4] and *The Advancement of Learning* owes a good deal of its pungency to those pithy comparisons and muscular idioms that Elizabethan English threw up so readily:

> 'whereas reason does buckle and bow the mind unto the nature of things'.

> 'As for the possibility, they are ill discoverers that think there is no land where they can see nothing but sea'.

> 'Therefore I wish some collection to be made [of the opinions of ancient philosophers concerning nature] but here I must give warning, that it be done distinctly and severally; the philosophies of every one throughout by themselves; and not by titles packed and faggoted up together, as hath been done by Plutarch. For it is the harmony of a philosophy in itself which giveth it light and credence; whereas if it be singled and broken, it will seem more foreign and dissonant'.

> 'For it is in knowledges as it is in plants: if you mean to use the plant, it is no matter for the roots; but if you remove it to grow, then it is more assured to rest upon roots than slips'.

There is, however, a significant difference between Bacon's use of Elizabethan idiom and that of the majority of his contemporaries. In the first place, the great majority of his figures of speech are simple *illustrations* of the ideas that he wishes to convey.

> 'It were good to divide natural philosophy into the mine and the furnace, and to make two professions or occupations of natural philosophers, some to be pioneers and some smiths; some to dig, and some to refine and hammer'.

> 'And howsoever contention hath been moved touching an uniformity of method in multiformity of matter, yet we see how that opinion, besides the weakness of it, hath been of ill desert towards learning, as that which taketh the way to reduce learning to certain empty and barren generalities; being but the very husks and shell of sciences, all the kernel being forced out and expulsed with the torture and press of the method . . .'

[4]Some especially lively passages will be found in the description of the Cornish rebellion, and in the account of the capture of Perkin Warbeck.

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'For as in buildings there is great pleasure and use in the well-casting of the stair-cases, entries, doors, windows, and the like; so in speech the conveyances and passages are of special ornament and effect'.

'As for philosophers, they make imaginary laws for imaginary commonwealths; and their discourses are as the stars, which give little light because they are so high'.

'This same truth is a naked and open day-light, that doth not show the masques and mummeries and triumphs of the world, half so stately and daintily as candle-lights. Truth may perhaps come to the price of a pearl, that sheweth best by day; but it will not rise to the price of a diamond or carbuncle, that sheweth best in varied lights'.

'After these two noble fruits of friendship (peace in the affections, and support of the judgment) followeth the last fruit, which is like the pomegranate, full of many kernels; I mean aid and bearing a part in all actions and occasions'.

In all these quotations (taken more or less at random from the *Advancement* and the *Essays*) the function of the images is not to intensify the meaning, to make it deeper or richer, but simply to make more effective a meaning that was already fully formed before the application of the illustrative device.[5] Shelley declared that Bacon was a poet. In reading his work what we are most frequently forced to remember is that he was a brilliant lawyer. Some analysis of a further example or two may make clear the distinction that I wish to establish.

Among the lesser diseases or 'peccant humours' of learning Bacon lists the belief (which he considers erroneous) that time preserves what is most worth preserving and that what has been lost was not worth keeping:

'as if the multitude, or the wisest for the multitude's sake, were not ready to give passage rather to that which is popular and superficial than to that which is substantial and profound; for the truth is, that time seemeth to be of the nature of a river or stream, which carrieth down to us that which is light and blown

[5]The process is seen most clearly when the illustration has not its usual aptness. 'Shepherds of people had need know the kalendars of tempests in state; which are commonly greatest when things grow to equality; as natural tempests are greatest about the *Æquinoctia*' ('Of Seditions and Troubles'). As A. S. Gaye points out in his edition of the *Essays*, 'The analogy between the equality of classes in a state and the equality in length of day and night is very far fetched'. It could not have been made if Bacon had not been intent on making his political point to the exclusion of any real interest in the natural phenomena involved in illustration.

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up, and sinketh and drowneth that which is weighty and solid' (291-292).

This has so convincing an air that on a first reading we are not likely to question the legitimacy of the play on 'light' and 'solid'. Closer inspection reveals that although the analogy appears to clinch the argument, it does not in fact prove anything. The comparison is *imposed,* and instead of possessing the validity that comes from the perception of similarity it is simply a rhetorical trick. We find something of the same kind in the famous attack on the elaboration of 'vain matter':

> 'Surely, like as many substances in nature which are solid do putrefy and corrupt into worms, so it is the property of good and sound knowledge to putrefy and dissolve into a number of subtile, idle, unwholesome, and (as I may term them) vermiculate questions, which have indeed a kind of quickness and life of spirit, but no soundness of matter or goodness of quality. This kind of degenerate learning did chiefly reign amongst the schoolmen; who having sharp and strong wits, and abundance of leisure, and small variety of reading; but their wits being shut up in the cells of a few authors (chiefly Aristotle their dictator) as their persons were shut up in the cells of monastries and colleges; and knowing little history, either of nature or time; did out of no great quantity of matter, and infinite agitation of wit, spin out unto us those laborious webs of learning which are extant in their books. For the wit and mind of man, if it work upon matter, which is the contemplation of the creatures of God, worketh according to the stuff, and is limited thereby; but if it work upon itself, as the spider worketh his web, then it is endless, and brings forth indeed cobwebs of learning, admirable for the fineness of thread and work, but of no substance or profit' (285-286).

Bacon is here formulating one of the central doctrines of his philosophy, one, moreover, that has a permanent as well as an historical value. But is is simply on his method of argument that, for the moment, I wish to direct attention. The passage opens with a general truth: the study of 'vain matter' is, by definition, a perversion of learning, and 'vermiculate questions' defines aptly the relation of the diseased to the wholesome substance. The figures of the cell and the spider, on the other hand, although they apparently perform a similar function—namely, to define a particular example of the general kind—serve rather to weight the argument with feelings of contempt and to produce an air of finality that is not justified by any proof actually adduced. By combining a general truth with rhetoric Bacon has contrived to make *all* scholastic learning look silly and to recommend his own positivistic attitude as the only one possible for a reasonable man. The brilliance of the exposition should not blind us to the fact that what we have here is the enunciation of a partial truth as though it were the whole truth, the statement of a case intended to demolish opposite or

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complementary points of view. There are, after all, more ways in which the mind can 'work upon itself' than in spinning vain theories from inadequate material, just as there are more kinds of 'profit' than those envisaged by Bacon.

Bacon's figures of speech are forensic, intended to convince or confound. Some are used simply as apt illustrations of particular points; some serve to impose on the reader the required feeling or attitude. In neither kind is there any vivid feeling for *both* sides of the analogy such as we find in more representative Elizabethans. Elizabethan prose writers—from Hooker to Nashe, and from Nashe to Deloney and Dekker—also use figures to illustrate an argument or to support a case; but most of their similes and metaphors have a life of their own—sometimes too abundant and vigorous a life for the purpose of logical or 'scientific' argument—whereas in Bacon the analogues only have value for the support they offer to his demonstration. I think it is true to say that Shakespeare's metaphorical complexity, by means of which a new meaning emerges from many tensions, is the development of modes of perception pervasive in the prose of the time and directly derived from the normal processes of living. But the characteristically Shakespearean manner, depending as it does on the maximum range of sensitive awareness, is diametrically opposed to the Baconian manner, which represents a development of assertive will and practical reason at the expense of the more delicately perceptive elements of the sensibility. You see this especially in Bacon's images taken from Nature. In my own reading of Bacon I have only found one passage that indicates any sense of the creative life behind the natural phenomena that he observes.[6] And in this of course he points forward to the eighteenth century. To Shakespeare and the majority of his contemporaries 'Nature' indicated a world of non-human life to which man was bound by intimate and essentially religious ties. By the beginning of the eighteenth century 'Nature' had come to mean simply the daylight world of common sense and practical effort. Man had ceased to feel 'the filial bond' binding him to all that is not human, and assumed without question that his part was simply to observe, to understand and to dominate the world of 'matter'. Almost as much as his explicit philosophy, Bacon's prose style is an index of the emergence of the modern world.

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[6] 'For if these two things be supposed, that a man set before him honest and good ends, and again that he be resolute, constant, and true unto them, it will follow that he shall mould himself into all virtue at once. And this is indeed like the work of nature; whereas the other course is like the work of the hand. For as when a carver makes an image, he shapes only that part whereupon he worketh; as if he be upon the face, that part which shall be the body is but a rude stone still, till such times as he comes to it; but contrariwise when nature makes a flower or living creature, she formeth rudiments of all the parts at one time' (441-442).

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III.

The findings of the last section can be reinforced and developed by some consideration of Bacon's explicit theory of the function of language, which in turn is closely related to his conception of the mind of man.

It is the 'first distemper of learning, when men study words and not matter', for 'words are but the images of matter; and except they have life of reason and invention, to fall in love with them is all one as to fall in love with a picture' (284). The more developed expression of these views in the second Book of the *Advancement* has some of the difficulty and confusion that is natural in a pioneer work; but it is clear that of the various functions of language Bacon attaches by far the greatest importance to what we should now call the referential function—that which is of primary importance in exact description and rational analysis. Expressive function is relegated to a subordinate place and, as we shall see, rather curiously handled. Words are essentially 'notes' (*i.e.* signs) of things or of 'cogitations'. 'Words', he says, 'are but the current tokens or marks of Popular Notions of things'; and he describes the second duty of grammar as 'philosophical, examining the power and nature of words as they are footsteps and prints of reason'[7] (399-401).

This attitude to language has both positive and negative qualities. Some of the best passages in the *Advancement* concern the need for clarity in exposition and the avoidance of merely verbal quibbling. For Bacon 'the great sophism of all sophisms' is 'equivocation or ambiguity of words and phrase, specially of such words as are most general and intervene in every inquiry' (394); and all that is strong and valuable in his thinking comes out in his exposure of the mischief of ambiguity in what purports to be clear and rational argument.

> 'And lastly, let us consider the false appearances that are imposed upon us by words,[8] which are framed and applied according to the conceit and capacities of the vulgar sort: and although we think we govern our words, and prescribe it well, *Loquendum ut vulgus, sentiendum ut sapientes,* yet certain it is that words, as a Tartar's bow, do shoot back upon the understanding of the wisest, and mightily entangle and pervert the judgment; so as it is almost necessary in all controversies and disputations to imitate the wisdom of the Mathematicians, in setting down in the very beginning the definitions of our words and terms, that others may know how we accept and understand them, and whether they concur with us or no. For it cometh to pass for want of this, that we are sure to end there where we ought to have begun, which is in

[7] In the lines from Cowley quoted above it is accepted as indisputable that words 'are but Pictures of the Thought'.

[8] These are the Idols of the Market-place, the name being given in the *De Augmentis*.

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questions and differences about words' (396-397).[9]

This excellent caution obviously looks forward to the prescriptions of the Royal Society ('reducing all things as near the mathematical plainness as they can'), and it marks a necessary step forward if the English language was to be made, what it was not in Elizabethan times, a tool for scientific analysis and the construction of methodical systems. Debility set in when this one kind of usage came to be regarded as supreme, and the tyranny of grammar and dictionary meanings succeeded in ironing out the rich complexities of Elizabethan English—a process reflected in the handling of Shakespeare's text by his eighteenth-century editors, and their successors.

The negative qualities of Bacon's attitude to words can be seen in his discussion of rhetoric and poetry, of language, that is, adapted to any other than a purely referential use. Rhetoric, in Bacon's eyes, was something of a deceitful art, for he speaks of 'eloquence and other impressions of like nature, which do paint and disguise the true appearance of things (382). Nevertheless, it is an 'ornament' (326), it is useful 'in civil occasions', and 'sensible and plausible elocution' may be allowed 'to clothe and adorn the obscurity even of philosophy itself' (284). In this Bacon is doing little more than repeat the commonplaces of contemporary rhetoricians, but we may notice that the metaphors of clothing and adorning that he applies to eloquence point forward to a view of *all* art as, at best, a decorative side-line increasingly held by practical men as the century advanced;[10] and in this they could find further support in Bacon's

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[9]A similar passage occurs in the essay, 'Of Unity of Religion': 'A man that is of judgment and understanding shall sometimes hear ignorant men differ, and know well within himself that those which so differ mean one thing, and yet they themselves would never agree . . . Men create oppositions which are not; and put them into new terms so fixed, as whereas the meaning ought to govern the term, the term in effect governeth the meaning'.

[10]Louis B. Wright, in his valuable book, *Middle-Class Culture in Elizabethan England,* gives some illuminating extracts from *Academiarum Examen,* by a certain John Webster (1654). Webster's view of 'cultural subjects' is indicated by the following:

> 'Lastly, for *Rhetorick,* or *Oratory, Poesie,* and the like, which serve for adornation, and are as it were the outward dress, and attire of more solid sciences; first they might tollerably pass, if there were not too much affectation towards them, and too much pretious time spent about them, while more excellent and necessary learning lies neglected and passed by: . . .'

Chapter III of Mr. Wright's book ('The Concern over Learning') illustrates very clearly the pronounced utilitarian strain in Elizabethan and seventeenth-century writings on education. The philosophical current form Descartes was also influential in lowering the status of poetry. See Basil Willey, *The Seventeenth-Century Background,* Chap. V, Sect. 2, 'Poetry and the Cartesian Spirit'.

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scattered comments on poetry and the imagination.

Bacon's use of the word, 'imagination', would provide the subject for an Exercise in Interpretation, but it is an exercise that I shrink from performing. It is clear, however, that in human affairs[11] he assigns to imagination (however defined) a status decidedly inferior to that of the reason by means of which the mind reflects and works upon 'matter'. In the short section on poetry, included in the general survey of the branches of learning with which the second Book of the *Advancement* opens, the formal eulogy is less significant than the oddly limited function assigned to imaginative works.

> 'The use of this Feigned History [that is, poetry] hath been to give shadow of satisfaction to the mind of man in those points wherein the nature of things doth deny it; the world being in proportion inferior to the soul; by reason whereof there is agreeable to the spirit of man a more ample greatness, a more exact goodness, and a more absolute variety, than can be found in the nature of things. . . . So as it appeareth that poesy serveth and conferreth to magnanimity, morality, and to delectation. And therefore it was ever thought to have some participation of divineness, because it doth raise and erect the mind, by submitting the shews of things to the desires of the mind; whereas reason doth buckle and bow the mind unto the nature of things' (343-344).

After some examples of the moral value of poetical fables, the section concludes:

> 'But to ascribe unto it that which is due; for the expressing of affections, passions, corruptions, and customs, we are beholding to poets more than to the philosophers' works; and for wit and eloquence not much less than to orators' harangues. But it is not good to stay too long in the theatre. Let us now pass on to the judicial place or palace of the mind, which we are to approach and view with more reverence and attention' (346).

This account is significant in various ways. In the first place, when Bacon descends from general encomium to an enumeration of the specific virtues of poetry he confines himself entirely (as elsewhere in the *Advancement*) to the explicit moral lessons and illustrations of human temperament that it affords. And in this his theory conforms to his practice; for although the *Advancement*, like the *Essays*, is studded with literary quotations and allusions, their purpose is invariably to point a moral or illustrate an argument: there is never any indication that Bacon has been *moved* by poetry or that he attaches any value to its power of deepening and refining

[11]For 'in matters of Faith and Religion we raise our Imagination above our Reason'—but only because Imagination is an *instrument* of truths which unaided human reason cannot fully grasp.

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the emotions. One sentence, it is true, allows to poetry 'some participation of divineness, because it doth raise and erect the mind, by submitting the shews of things to the desires of the mind'. But if this is a considered judgment it can only mean that poetry, when not explicitly 'moral', is a kind of holiday play,[12] a temporary relief from the discipline of the sharply contrasted 'reason'. There is certainly no suggestion that poetry itself can be an exploration of emotion or a discipline of 'desire'. Bacon in fact sanctions that divorce between imagination and reason emotion and intelligence that—long before the Romantic Revival—was to have a bad effect on English poetry; and he passes with evident relief from the 'theatre', where 'feigned histories' are enacted, to 'the judicial place or palace of the mind, which we are to approach and view with more reverence and attention'.

The different kinds of emphasis that Bacon gives to the different uses of language—subordinating the emotional and expressive to the descriptive and analytic—are of course directly related to his conception of the mind of man as, primarily, an instrument for registering and manipulating the objects of the physical world. He was the first great exponent of pragmatic utilitarianism, and his practical and utilitarian attitude colours the whole of his work. A principal purpose of *The Advancement of Learning* was to break down the distrust of theoretical knowledge felt by 'pragmatical men'[13] and to win for learning a place in the modern state—a place that could only be assured 'if contemplation and action may be more nearly and straitly conjoined and united than they have been' (294). The direction of his thinking is indicated by the constant recurrence of such phrases as, 'use and practice', the 'use of such knowledge in civil occasions', 'the serious use of business and occasions'; and the aim was the development of 'such natural philosophy as shall not vanish in the fume of subtile, sublime or delectable speculations, but such as shall be operative to the endowment and benefit of man's life'.[14] Bacon's exposition of this purpose has of course a permanent value, and it has been properly acclaimed. What has not been sufficiently remarked is that the central tenets of his philosophy involve an attitude towards the emotions that makes against wholeness of living. Discussing the need for inquiry concerning the affections or emotions, he remarks: 'it followeth in

[12]'For as for Poesy, it is rather a pleasure or play of imagination, than a work or duty thereof' (382).

[13]That 'pragmatical men may not go away with an opinion that learning is like a lark, that can mount and sing and please herself, and nothing else' (456). It is noteworthy that most of the objections to learning that Bacon answers in the first Book of the *Advancement* are of the kind that might be brought by those in control of state affairs.

[14]This last quotation is taken from a passage in which Bacon recommends 'the use of History Mechanical' as 'of all others the most radical and fundamental towards natural philosophy' (332).

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order to know the diseases and infirmities of the mind, which are no other than the perturbations and distempers of the affections'. Although it is 'the perturbations and distempers' of the emotions that are noted as the diseases of the mind, the emotions themselves are regarded with some suspicion: 'it may be fitly said, that the mind in the nature thereof would be temperate and stayed, if the affections, as winds, did not put it into tumult and perturbation' (437).[15] It is plain that for Bacon the ideal towards which men should strive is expressed in the famous image of the mind as 'a clear and equal glass, wherein the beams of things should reflect according to their true incidence'. As things are, of course, the mind 'is rather like an enchanted glass, full of superstition and imposture, if it be not delivered and reduced' (394-395), but what is *desirable* is that it should approximate more and more to the condition of a perfect reflector of 'things'. We have here the germ of much later psychology in which the mind is conceived primarily as something that 'reacts' to external 'stimuli'. What Bacon ignores completely is the creative and vital forces in the mind itself; and it is relevant to notice the inadequacy and barrenness of his reflexions on subjects involving intimate and personal emotions in the *Essays* (they are naturally not much considered in the *Advancement*). In the essays, 'Of Parents and Children' and 'Of Marriage and Single Life', for example, he reduces personal relations to schematic generalizations, handling them almost entirely from the 'public' point of view. Although the tenth essay is headed, 'Of Love', it is mainly concerned with the dangers attending 'the mad degree of love', which in turn becomes confused with normal sexual feeling, for this too seems to come under the head of 'weakness' or 'folly'. And not only does Bacon in this essay refuse to admit the validity of subjective estimates of worth—'It is a strange thing to note the excess of this passion, and how it braves the nature and value of things, by this, that the speaking in a perpetual hyperbole is comely in nothing but in love'—he seems to think it possible to compartmentalize one's feelings and actions: 'They do best, who, if they cannot but admit love, yet make it keep quarter, and sever it wholly from their affairs and actions of life'. This by itself would not have much significance (though Bacon was accustomed to weigh his words). But the whole trend of Bacon's work is to encourage the relegation of instinctive and emotional life to a sphere separate from and inferior to the sphere of 'thought' and practical activity.

This derogation of instinct and emotion, although it has obvious

[15]It is significant that at the end of the paragraph from which this is taken Bacon comments on the 'special use in moral and civil matters' of knowledge 'how to set affection against affection, and to master one by another . . . employing the predominant affections of *fear* and *hope* [*i.e.* punishment and reward] for the suppressing and bridling the rest' (438). Shakespeare's metaphor for the relation of law and natural impulse, in *Measure for Measure*—'the needful bits and curbs for headstrong weeds'—is far more complex.

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affinities with 'the puritan outlook', which in turn was an intensification of one strand in the complex pattern of mediaeval thought, was something new in the purely humanistic literature of the Renaissance; but it came to permeate more and more the accepted attitudes of the succeeding age. It is, in fact, one symptom of that shift in the direction of men's interests and attention that is reflected in the development of the English language at the time of the Restoration, and that was largely responsible for the divorce between 'reason' on the one hand and creative perception and the feelings generally on the other—'reason' of course having the pre-eminence. The history of this dissociation of sensibility, like all important movements of the human mind and spirit, is far too complex to be summed up in a few unqualified generalizations. It can be studied however—although it was far more than a literary phenomenon—in the literature of the eighteenth century. And in this respect the so-called Romantic Revival made no essential difference, for in spite of the great achievements of a few of the 'Romantic' poets the general *effect* of their work was to perpetuate the division between 'poetry' and 'life', between those emotions that a sensitive person might wish to cultivate and the less lofty but (it was felt) more 'real' equipment that served in practical affairs; and whilst poetry became more poetical material life reached a peak of dehumanizing ugliness. Yeats remarks in his *Discoveries* that by the beginning of the nineteenth century 'the highest faculties had faded, taking the sense of beauty with them, into some sort of vague heaven and left the lower to lumber where they best could'.[16] The process leading to that division within the mind and feelings—within the human psyche as a whole—began in the seventeenth century; and the work of Francis Bacon points forward to the conscious and unconscious utilitarianism of the nineteenth century of which we ourselves are the embarrassed heirs.

[16]An extreme case of spiritual aridity resulting from a Hard Fact education is recorded in John Stuart Mill's *Autobiography*. Mill was saved from a break-down largely by a timely reading of Wordsworth whom he, like Arnold, continued to value for his 'healing-power' in 'this iron time'. It is in connexion with this period of his life that Mill comments: 'In most other countries the paramount importance of the sympathies as a constituent of individual happiness is an axiom, taken for granted rather than needing any formal statement; but most English thinkers almost seem to regard them as necessary evils, required for keeping men's actions benevolent and compassionate. Roebuck was, or appeared to be, this kind of Englishman. He saw little good in any cultivation of the feelings, and none at all in cultivating them through the imagination, which he thought was only cultivating illusions'.

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IV.

The title page of Bacon's *Novum Organum* shows a ship in full sail, setting out beyond the Pillars of Hercules towards the new and uncharted lands, and to-day—in 'this American world' of scientific progress—the symbol is seen to have been especially appropriate. The dividends paid have been far beyond the dreams of the original projectors of the voyage, but, what was also not foreseen, technical mastery was accompanied by a spiritual impoverishment that has prevented the full realization even of the material gains. If we have learnt anything between the two wars it is that the period inaugurated by the Renaissance—with its buoyancy and belief in unlimited material progress—is coming to an end, and that only in a new orientation of the spirit is there hope for a chaotic and bewildered world. The limitations of the particular kind of scientific rationalism established in the seventeenth century have been recognized by scientists themselves; and it is beginning to be recognized that to regard nature *simply* as a storehouse of material for the human workshop and man *simply* as a manipulator has disastrous effects (soil erosion is the most obvious instance) even in the material sphere.[17] And it is now pretty generally accepted that the protests of isolated men of genius—Blake, Baudelaire or Lawrence—against the values of a world dominated by Progress were not merely aberrations expected from poets.

But, busy as we must be in overhauling the values of the last three hundred years, it is as well to remind ourselves that there is little use in proceeding in a blindly 'reactionary'[18] spirit. It is no use simply trying to reverse the direction of Bacon's symbolic ship and sail back. Perhaps to-day we are in a position to understand why Blake wrote on the title-page of his copy of Bacon's *Essays*, 'Good advice from Satan's kingdom'. But to make Bacon a villain in the drama of the post-Renaissance world and to abandon the hard-won and precarious rationalism that he helped to found

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[17]On which see *The Conditions of Peace* by K. E. Barlow (1942). The best analysis for the non-scientific reader of the assumptions of seventeenth-century science is still that contained in E. A. Burtt's *The Metaphysical Foundations of Modern Science* (1925), and Basil Willey's *The Seventeenth-Century Background* (1934), is of course also relevant. A. Wolf concludes the Preface to his *History of Science, Technology and Philosophy in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (1935) with these words: 'What has sustained him [the author] throughout the long and laborious exercise, apart from the intrinsic interest of the subject, is his belief that the world has need of a new intellectual re-orientation, and that to this end a close study of the history of human thought in its most objective spheres would be the best beginning'.

[18]This word has been so misused in recent years that I feel inverted commas are necessary to indicate that my use of it is here purely descriptive.

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and on which, until recently, Europe prided itself—to do this would be not only silly but disastrous. W. H. Auden in his *New Year Letter*—a kind of Hundred Points of Good Husbandry for contemporary intellectuals—has remarked:

> We know no fuss or pain or lying
> Can stop the moribund from dying,
> That all the special tasks begun
> By the Renaissance have been done.

This is a thought-blurring over-simplification. Some of the tasks begun by the Renaissance have still to be pushed a bit further—though not necessarily in the spirit of the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries. And if we ask what, in Bacon, is of high and permanent value the answer is, the disinterested and disciplined inquiring spirit—what Bacon called 'the laborious and sober inquiry of truth'. It is this, the genuinely scientific spirit, that gives life to many fine pages in *The Advancement of Learning* which, when all is said, is likely to remain as a permanent inspiration to 'those that seek truth and not magistrality'.

> 'Liberal learning 'taketh away all levity, temerity, and insolency, by copious suggestion of all doubts and difficulties, and acquainting the mind to balance reasons on both sides, and to turn back the first offers and conceits of the mind, and to accept of nothing but examined and tried'.

> 'For as knowledges are now delivered, there is a kind of contract of error between the deliverer and the receiver: for he that delivereth knowledge desireth to deliver it in such form as may be best believed, and not as may be best examined; and he that receiveth knowledge desireth rather present satisfaction than expectant inquiry; and so rather not to doubt than not to err: glory making the author not to open his weakness, and sloth making the disciple not to know his strength'.

> 'If it be truth . . . the voice of nature will consent, whether the voice of man do or no . . . I like better that entry of truth which cometh peaceably . . . than that which cometh with pugnacity and contention'. For, 'in learning, where there is much controversy there is many times little inquiry'.

It is with these reminders of what is truly admirable in the *Advancement* that I wish to conclude; for the account that I have given of the limitations of attitude inherent in Bacon's work will have been completely misunderstood if it is taken to support any kind of 'anti-scientific' hocus-pocus. Aware of the limitations of scientific rationalism, dissatisfied with the forms of existence created by modern materialism, a large part of Europe has shown itself willing to abandon the gains altogether (the gains, that is, on the

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spiritual side, for even the most fanatical believers in Blood and Race show no signs of abandoning the internal-combustion engine) and to fall back on the irrational. What we need, on the contrary, is not to abandon reason, but simply to recognize that reason in the last three centuries has worked within a field which is not the whole of experience, that it has mistaken the part for the whole, and imposed arbitrary limits on its own working. Both within those limits and outside them are still gains to be won *by reason,* but by a reason, or intelligence, that recognizes the claims of the sensibility as a whole and tries to work in harmony with it.

L. C. KNIGHTS.

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COMMENTS AND REVIEWS

THE INNOCENCE OF DR. WOOSTER.

It is reported that Mr. P. G. Wodehouse has applied for permission to live in Sweden, but that the Nazi authorities haven't so far granted this. It is a reminder of the painful fall of Wodehouse's reputation, a fall the 'national humorist' (*The Manchester Guardian*) certainly hasn't deserved. Looking at it broadly, which was the more absurd?—the enthusiastic applause which greeted the confering upon him of a honorary Doctorate of Laws by Oxford University (in company with Sir Edmund Chambers and Sir Herbert Grierson) in 1939, or the outburst of righteous indignation at his broadcast from Berlin a year later?

I am not defending the Haw-Haws of this world, but the gentlemen who applauded Dr. Bertie Wooster in 1939 and said 'P. G. should be shot' in 1940 should have remembered two things: (a) his reputation as a comic writer, and (b) his actual broadcast.

To take the last point first: the chief impression I received from his broadcast was its cheerful irrelevance, its fatuous irresponsibility. He said (if my memory serves me) that the Nazis were welcome to India so long as they set him (Wodehouse) free. What more could be expected of one who in 1937 wrote:

> 'The situation in Germany had come up for discussion in the bar parlour of the Angler's Rest, and it was generally agreed that Hitler was standing at the cross-roads and would soon be compelled to do something definite. His present policy, said a Whiskey and Splash, was mere shilly-shallying.
>
> 'He'll have to let it grow or shave it off' said the Whiskey and Splash. 'He can't go on sitting on the fence like this, Either a man has a moustache or he has not. There can be no middle course . . .'

What more did the Nazis (or the British) expect? The Doctor is out to entertain, and entertain he will, in spite of unemployment, starvation and war. And I think, having adopted this course, he is right. We are now at point (a), but reverting to (b) for a moment, the Nazis must surely have seen that Dr. Wooster was gently pulling their leg. It is a wonder his British compatriots shouldn't have realized that the 'traitor' from the Drones Club wasn't in the same category at all as the traitor from Galway. It is significant that the Nazis found no further use for our 'national humorist.'

We know, of course, that the business-cum-Riviera set of which he is the representative in fiction (on the stage—strip-tease) were very pally with Goering and Co. right up to the outbreak of war (see *The New Statesman ad. lib.*), but now that they are (or appear

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to be) facing the other way, they really shouldn't wax indignant at one of their number who happened to be caught. I would regard with extreme suspicion the opinion that Dr. Wooster, taking apparently the same inane view of life as expressed in his novels, saw Nazi Germany as the white hope of the future. He may have been favourably impressed by Goering—so was Sir Neville Henderson. And his dog. But the Doctor is a professional entertainer, working the same formula in *Lord Emsworth and Others* (1937), as in the early *Love Among Chickens*. If the formula hadn't worked, then he would have adopted a fresh one. But it did work!—witness the extragavant eulogies of Hilaire Belloc, Gerald Gould, R. H. Bruce-Lockhart, J. B. Priestley, and Compton Mackenzie; and the favourable estimate in the *Concise Cambridge History*; and the enthusiastic reviews of not only *Punch, The Field, The Daily Mail,* and the *Sunday Times,* but the *Spectator,* the *Times Literary Supplement,* the *Observer* and the *Scotsman*. I could add almost the entire press, with the exception of *Scrutiny,* whose disgusted review of *Doctor* Wodehouse will be remembered:

> 'There may, of course, be an excessive lack of sympathy in the view that his humour is a cross of Prep-school and *Punch,* his invention puerile, the brightness of his style the inane, mechanical and monotonous brightness of the worst schoolboy slang (the whole point of which, in so far as it has any, lies in its shamefaced rejection of the standards of maturity—Mr. Wodehouse's humour, according to the view in question, works within the ethos of that slang: there is no criticism from outside). But Mr. Wodehouse is certainly incomparably less of an artist than the late W. W. Jacobs, whom no university would have considered honouring. Dons to-day, however, are not highbrows . . .'

We recall C. S. Lewis's book *Rehabilitations,* in the course of which he says (I am quoting him from Mr. Knights's review in these pages):

> 'Beware how you scorn the best sellers of to-day; they may be classics for the intelligentsia of the Twenty-Third Century. If our age is known to posterity not as that of Eliot and Auden but as that of Buchan and Wodehouse (and stranger things have come to pass), Buchan and Wodehouse will then be B's (*i.e.* Good Books) and little boys will get good marks for reading them . . .'

I defy Mr. Lewis to name a stranger thing than that would be, unless he is referring to his own authority as an Oxford tutor and lecturer as a result of such puerile criticisms, but that's not the point. Nor is it important from the point of view of this essay that Mr. Lewis is damaging his reputation, such as it is—what concerns us here is that Mr. Lewis is doing Wodehouse and the late Lord Tweedsmuir no good at all by drawing such comparisons. It is much the same attitude as that revealed by Mr. Belloc when he pugnaciously and in his best debating manner commits himself to the statement (in *The Week-end Wodehouse*) that the creator

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of Jeeves is 'the best writer of English now living'. Of course, we see through that debating trick and recognize the animosity against certain 'highbrow' writers that is behind it, but if only Mr. Belloc would realize that he is doing P.G. a major injustice by so glory-fying him. He is *on his own level* a most amusing writer. While admitting the justice of F.R.L.'s remark quoted above, that view is only tenable when we apply serious standards, such as might be applied to Eliot, Forster and Myers. Mr. Leavis would be surprised to know that at least two out of *Scrutiny's* occasional contributors read Wodehouse and find him amusing on his own level. I remember T. R. Barnes trying to catch me out by reading solemnly an extract from a Wodehouse novel in the hope that I would say it was by some more serious writer. I, however, knowing my Wodehouse, didn't fall into the trap. This is by no means to says that Mr. Leavis's opinion is not profoundly true. If you apply serious standards, then P.G. is a total loss; if you don't, then he has something to offer in his limited fashion.

Mr. MacCarthy's dictum on Sterne ('his attitude towards all emotions was playful') can be applied, with even greater truth (surely Sterne was something more than that) to Mr. Wodehouse. If we add 'all thinking' as well, then we are getting closer still to the 'best writer of English now living'. Before Oxford conferred a doctorate upon this simple entertainer, they (or Cambridge) should have previously given the honour to not only W. W. Jacobs but Agatha Christie. Edgar Wallace, Dorothy Sayers, Jeffrey Farnol, Frank Richards, P. C. Wren, Ethel M. Dell, Sexton Blake, etc. Take *Lord Emsworth and Others,* the only novel by the Doctor that I have by me at the moment. I personally found it very amusing, but it exhibits all the mannerisms which Mr. Leavis indicated, and many others he was too disgusted to spot. From the point of view of the 'cross of Prep-school and *Punch*', it will be recalled that the Doctor started his career as a writer of school stories, in the tradition of Gunby Hadath and Warren Bell, and I believe that it was the success of Psmith at school that led him to produce Psmith out of school, and so led by degrees to the creation of Bertie Wooster, Jeeves, Mr. Mulliner, Ukridge, Lord Emsworth and the Oldest Member.

But it is not in the tradition of the Hadath-Bell type of school story that these 'brilliantly farcical' stories (*The Times*) and 'merry entertainments' (*The Morning Post*) really belong. They owe more to Frank Richards and the *Magnet*—the splendid boys' paper which in its turn (as George Orwell points out) owe much to *Stalky and Co.* Anyone who has read the *Magnet* (and who has not?—except those, of course, who went to schools like Greyfriars, if there are any such), with its 'groo, yarooh', the constant kicking of Bunter's tight bottom, and the many occasions on which the Famous Five are 'diddled, dished and done', will recognize their logical successors in *Lord Emsworth,* where about every seven pages some Wodehousian character receives a severe and almost mortal shock, in some such phrase as 'the melody died on his lips and he was rocking

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back on his heels as if he had received a solid punch on the nose' or 'he stopped so abruptly that he almost dislocated his spine. His jaw had fallen and his pince-nez were dancing on their string like leaves in the wind'. It is to such phrases that George Sampson apparently is referring when he tells us, in his *Concise Cambridge History*, that 'Wodehouse has a gift for highly original aptness of phrase that almost suggests a poet struggling for release among the wild extravagancies of farce', or is he referring to that prime bit of Bertie Wooster, in one of the Jeeves stories, 'I pronged a moody forkful of the e. and b.'? Amusing, doubtless, but 'almost a poet' and 'highly original'? I resent the implied insult to the *Magnet*.

There is, of course, the same snob-appeal, and just as Mr. Richards is always introducing a Shakespearean phrase ('The Famous Five, like the guests in Macbeth, waited not for the order of their going, but went at once'), so Jeeves is always quoting Pope. This is comparatively harmless, but sometimes the good Doctor pokes fun, in the manner of *Punch* in its more vulgar moments, at writers and artists in some such way as the following:

> Like all young artists nowadays, he had always held before him as the goal of his ambition the invention of some new comic animal for the motion pictures. What he burned to do, as Velasquez would have burned to do if he had lived to-day, was to think of another Mickey Mouse and then give up work and just sit back and watch the money roll in . . .

Notice the cunning wrench P.G. gives it: not any old artist, not Landseer or Meissonnier, but Velasquez, one of the finest artists in the world's history. But 'cunning' is hardly the word here. The same innocence that leads the Doctor to see nothing more in art than making money ('just sit back . . .') leads him to commit two breaches of good taste (my Catholic friends would call them downright blasphemies) in one book:

> 'You will appreciate my feelings. This barmaid, this Flossie, my ace of trumps, had proved a broken reed. I had thought her a very present help in time of trouble, and she had turned blue on me'.

But, bless you, the Doctor doesn't mean any harm. Politics means to him Hitler's moustache; Art means making money; Religion:

> . . In the hour of triumph Poskitt must inevitably melt. So pray, my boy'.
>
> A quick gleam lit up Wilmot Byng's blue eyes.
>
> 'You bet I'll pray,' he said. 'The way I'll pray will be nobody's business. Push off, and I'll start now . . .'

The really important things in life are money, golf and the Nineteenth Hole. But I would be wary of supposing this to be the Doctor's own view. He is out to entertain, and entertainment means for him an absolute ban on serious things: he either takes them in

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his stride and equates them with money or golf, or he simply passes them by. His attitude towards women is the romantic one, based mainly on love-at-first-sight, with a slightly contemptuous attitude, as befitting those who are mainly 'duffers' at golf. The poor, he thinks, are always with us, and act mainly as the 'greasy birds' who touch the pockets, but not the hearts, of the members of the Drones Club. Russia is where the Bolsheviks 'hang out'; America is the home of the gangsters and film stars; France produces the comic, gesticulating Frenchman in the tradition of the French master at Greyfriars. The literary tastes of the niece of an Earl are supposed to be Wild West thrillers of the 'Gol dern ye, Hank Spivis' type. His Earl is the forgetful Emsworth, his typical lounger is Bertie Wooster, his hearty is Ukridge (stolen direct from Coker of the Greyfriars fifth)—but why go on? Wodehouse may think some of these things himself, but he has banished thought from the universe of his stories—to say that his figures are puppets goes without saying, but he, I think, knows it, whereas J. B. Priestley, in his *Good Companions,* and Dorothy Sayers, in her *Gaudy Night,* imagine that their puppets are 'living characters', in the words of the Sunday reviewers. To my mind, Wodehouse is saved from having a bad effect upon anyone who has outgrown the third form by his very innocence, by his very facetiousness. Whereas the sort of people who read Mr. Priestley and Miss Sayers really imagine (as these writers do themselves) that life is exactly like that—and model themselves accordingly, with disastrous effects. Who would want to model himself on Bertie Wooster or Lord Emsworth?—they are not 'loveable' people, they are simply the creatures of farce. And the good Doctor certainly knows his job thoroughly—if he once let a critical phrase escape him, he would be lost; the nearest thing he gets to it is the following:

> 'Oh, Brancepeth', said the girl, her voice trembling, 'why haven't you money? If you only had the merest pittance—enough for a flat in Mayfair and a little week-end place in the country somewhere and a couple of good cars and a villa in the South of France and a bit of trout fishing on some decent stream, I would risk all for love. But as it is . . .'

Even here, P.G. is obviously merely amused, and he doesn't regard the girl with any ill-feelings.

To revert in conclusion to my first proposition—a writer with a reputation like Mr. Wodehouse's should not, could not, be regarded as a possible traitor to his country for anyone with a better memory than his own Lord Emsworth. The Doctor has a just cause of complaint against those who see nothing absurd in his going to Oxford for his Ll.D. in company with Sir Herbert Grierson—and, a year later, saying he should be shot. As Jeeves has it, 'I would scarcely advocate such a course' even by the notoriously fickle British Public.

R. C. CHURCHILL.

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THE HEIRS OF BAUDELAIRE

THE HERITAGE OF SYMBOLISM, by C. M. Bowra (Macmillan, 15/-).

One reviewer has called this book 'one of the best scholarly books on poetry ever written', and the description indicates very well the virtues and limitations of Mr. Bowra's study. It must not be confused with the more pretentious essays which have been published on contemporary European poetry. It is an honest, painstaking piece of work; the author has a genuine enthusiasm for the poets of whom he writes and the wealth of quotation from their poetry is evidence of his knowledge and good taste. But attempts which have been made in certain quarters to use his book to discredit Mr. Edmund Wilson's *Axel's Castle* as political propaganda make it necessary to state emphatically that as *literary criticism* it is not in the same class as Mr. Wilson's study of the same period.

One of the main difficulties in an undertaking of this kind lies in the definition of the term 'Symbolism' and in deciding which poets should be described as 'Symbolists'. It is here that Mr. Bowra seems to me to be on uncertain ground. He observes cautiously that it is dangerous to divide poets into movements, but goes on to suggest that certain European poets who appeared after 1890 'had some common qualities which make them look like members of a movement'.

> 'This movement', he continues with more assurance, 'may be regarded as a later development, a second wave, of those poetical activities which are variously known as Symbolist and Decadent. Neither name is exact, and attempts to demand precision from them usually fail. A poetic movement is recognized in its exponents, and the chief poets of Symbolism are Baudelaire, Verlaine and Mallarmé. Baudelaire was the first to exalt the value of symbols; Verlaine used them instinctively, and Mallarmé erected a metaphysic to explain and justify them. In his theory and his practice Mallarmé was the conclusion and crown of the Symbolist Movement'.

Although Mr. Bowra recognizes the immense importance of Baudelaire and tells us that without him Mallarmé's work would have been impossible, his criticism of him is mainly confined to a number of incidental references. He has little to say of Verlaine; Rimbaud, the greatest poet of the century after Baudelaire, is mentioned twice; Laforgue (whom he calls La Forgue) once, and Corbière is omitted altogether. The statement that 'Mallarmé was the crown and conclusion of the Symbolist Movement' is extremely ambiguous. It does not appear to be consistent with Mr. Bowra's treatment of him as the fountain head of the movement or with his theory of the second wave; and in so far as it suggests that

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Mallarmé wrote a special kind of poetry and that in this genre he was a greater poet than Rilke or Yeats, it seems to me to be mistaken. It is clear that if we are to have a coherent picture of the movement, the relations between Baudelaire and his immediate successors are of the utmost importance. Mr. Bowra, however, does not come to grips with the problem; he proceeds instead to discuss what he considers the salient points of Mallarmé's theory and practice.

> 'Seen in retrospect', he writes, 'the Symbolist Movement of the nineteenth century in France was fundamentally mystical . . . The mystical character of Symbolism was less definitely Christian than any of these manifestations [he is referring to Baudelaire's 'diabolism' and Verlaine's 'simple, unquestioning faith']. It was a religion of Ideal Beauty, of "le Beau" and "l'Idéal" . . . He [Mallarmé] and his followers are rightly called Symbolists, because they attempted to convey a supernatural experience in the language of visible things, and therefore almost every word is a symbol and is used not for its common purposes, but for the associations which it evokes of a reality beyond the senses'.

In the chapters which follow Mr. Bowra proceeds, with varying fortunes, to study these doctrines in the work of five modern poets—Valéry, Rilke, Stefan George, Alexander Blok and Yeats. His choice seems to me to be somewhat arbitrary. Not all the poets respond satisfactorily to his treatment and in some cases it is clearly differences and not resemblances which ought to detain us. In dealing with Valéry, for example, he has to admit that 'The mystical view of poetry has been replaced by the acceptance of it as a fact like other facts'. He realizes that there are different kinds of symbols, but though he can point to the use of the 'angel' as a symbol of 'the absolute of poetic inspiration' in Mallarmé and Rilke, he remarks of the German poet: 'It is as if he had been intended by nature to be a Symbolist, but had expended his energies on other kinds of poetry until he found himself forced into a Symbolism of his own creation'. He is on firmer ground when he points out that 'Rilke almost anticipates the psychological sequence which T. S. Eliot used in *The Waste Land*'; but unfortunately he does not develop this interesting suggestion and merely adds that 'he does not change with such leaps and bounds from one subject to another'. George provides less tractable material and we learn that the paradox of his career is that 'he began as an admiring pupil of Mallarmé and ended as a national prophet'. He writes of Yeats's later work that it 'has a kind of symbolism quite unlike his earlier mythological symbolism', but we are again hampered by the critic's failure to particularize.

The same unevenness is apparent when the essays are considered as literary criticism. The study of Rilke seems to me to be much the most successful in the book and is the best introduction to that difficult poet which I have come across in English. The essay on Valéry is a useful account of the poet's theories, but it

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leaves us with the feeling that Mr. Bowra is more successful when expounding a poet's theories than when defining the particular qualities which make his work valuable as poetry. The account of George, with his shaky political views and his unsavoury admiration for his boy-friend, Maximin, fails to explain the great value which many readers set on his poetry. Blok provides a good deal of support for the mystical interpretation of poetry, but it is evident that criticism based on translations can give us very little idea of the interest of the originals. He wastes too much time over Yeats's early poetry and nothing particularly striking emerges from his criticism of the later work.

I have given what I hope is a fair summary of Mr. Bowra's thesis and have suggested some of the difficulties that it raises. These difficulties cannot be disposed of in a few words, but before putting forward an alternative view of recent developments in European poetry I should like to say very definitely that the mystical view of poetry, which colours the whole of Mr. Bowra's criticism, strikes me as fundamentally false and that in so far as it was adopted by the poets whom he discusses it accounts for some of the most serious weaknesses of their work.

The difficulty over the definition of Symbolism is not new and is not confined to Mr. Bowra. A number of attempts to define it have been made by French critics, but to the English reader very few of them appear to be of much assistance. Most of them try to reduce it to a single technical device or to a single aspect of their view of life. Valéry and Gide provide two characteristic examples:

> 'Ce qui fut baptisé: le *Symbolisme*, se résume très simplement dans l'intention commune à plusieurs familles de poètes . . . de "reprendre à la Musique, leur bien". Le secret de ce mouvement n'est pas autre'. (*Variété*).
>
> 'Voyez-vous, la grande faiblesse de l'école symboliste, c'est de n'avoir apporté qu'une esthétique; toutes les grandes écoles ont apporté, avec un nouveau style, une nouvelle éthique, un nouveau cahier de charges, de nouvelles tables, une nouvelle façon de voir, de comprendre l'amour, et de se comporter dans la vie. Le symboliste, lui, c'est bien simple: il ne se comportait pas du tout dans la vie; il ne cherchait pas à la comprendre; il la niait; il lui tournait le dos'. (A character in *les Faux-Monnayeurs*).

A more helpful suggestion comes from Remy de Gourmont who declared that Symbolism in poetry was the counterpart of Idealism in philosophy. This is admittedly only part of the story, but it does draw attention to an interesting parallel between two forms of mental activity and though Gourmont was inclined to overlook the weaknesses of both modern poets and modern philosophers, he did manage to show in what way modern individualism had increased the scope of poetry.

Eliot provides us with another useful pointer when he remarks, in a passage which I have quoted before and to which I shall return:

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'Donne, Corbière, Laforgue begin with their own feelings, and their limitation is that they do not always get much outside or beyond; Shakespeare, one feels, arrives at an objective world by a process from himself, whoever he was, as the centre and starting point . . With Donne and the French poets the pattern is given by what goes on in the mind rather than by the exterior events which provoke the mental activity and play of thought and feeling'. (*A Garland for John Donne*).

Mr. Wilson's view that modern French poetry is an extension and development of something that happened at the time of the Romantic Movement seems to me to be the true approach. He shows that the Romantic Movement began as a movement of liberation. It was a revolt against an order which had ceased to be a genuine order and had degenerated into a dogmatism which no longer corresponded to the vital experience of the race. The fruits of the Romantic Movement in France were, however, negative; its poets lost themselves in a world of words and failed to give adequate expression to the fresh emotions which had been released through the dissolution of the classical ideal. Baudelaire succeeded magnificently where they had failed. His work marks an immense extension of the poet's field and whole new regions of experience were transformed into poetry. The collapse of the old order inevitably led the poet to turn his mind inwards in the hope of coming to fresh common ground. In Baudelaire's hands poetry became an instrument of incomparable delicacy for recording emotional states and the mind was, perhaps, explored more completely than ever before in poetry. Words like *ennui* and *spleen* were defined with the mathematical precision of the seventeenth-century masters, but Baudelaire's language, which was extremely suggestive as well as extremely precise, revealed overtones and combinations of feelings which were undreamed of in the psychology of the preceding centuries. The accent should therefore fall on the exploration of this interior world and not on the supposed exploration of a world of transcendental reality.[1] We may feel that there is some justification for Mr. Wilson's contention that individualism has been carried to its extreme length, but we must agree with him when he remarks of these poets: 'They mapped the labyrinths of human consciousness as they seemed never to have been mapped before, they made one conceive the world in a new way'.

When Mr. Eliot writes of Baudelaire's poems: 'They seem to me to have the external but not the internal form of classic art', he unwittingly puts his finger on one of the essentials of his work. No one was more conscious than Baudelaire of the need of a new order, but he realized more clearly than anyone that the time was past when that order could be had for the asking. The task before him was to preserve the civilized values which had been enshrined in

[1] I have discussed the difficult case of Rimbaud in a review which appeared in *Scrutiny* for September, 1938.

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the classical tradition and by retaining traditional French versification he made a great civilization his point of reference and contrasted it with the confusion of his own times.

This brings us to his conception of the poet's function. He saw that all that made life worth living was suddenly threatened by the disappearance of traditional standards, by the spread of urban civilization and the emergence of a new and aggressive middle class. His sense of the importance of the poet which is apparent in his verse, his definition of the 'dandy' in his criticism and his onslaught on 'the bourgeois' are all fundamental to his outlook. The poet and the 'dandy' were one and the same and for Baudelaire they were the custodian of civilized values in what Eliot calls 'an age of progressive degradation'. In other words, his defence of the dandy was a defence of the patrician attitude, was an attempt to preserve what was best in the aristocratic societies of the past. While he shared this desire with a number of later writers, his approach must be distinguished from that of lesser men like Mallarmé. He fully appreciated the importance of religion for civilization, but he was careful to avoid turning the poet into a sort of priest or making poetry a substitute for religion. His superiority over his successors is nowhere more apparent than in the courage with which he faced a tragic situation and his refusal to seek refuge in the Ivory Tower which became the temple of the new cult.

I shall have something more to say of Baudelaire's versification, but I must turn now to his symbolism because practically every contemporary critic of the period has insisted on this to the exclusion of other not less important technical innovations. When Baudelaire remarks in his diary:

> 'Dans certains états de l'âme presque surnaturels, la profondeur de la vie se révèle tout entière dans le spectacle, si ordinaire qu'il soit, qu'on a sous les yeux. Il en devient le Symbole'.

we must be careful not to misunderstand the words *presque surnaturels*. Symbolism in one form or another has been used by nearly every great European poet and Baudelaire's definition could without violence be applied to their practice. The use of symbols is simply one aspect of language; the mistake lies in trying to invest them with some sort of transcendental significance instead of regarding them as a technical device of the same order as simile or metaphor. A symbol is nothing more than a vehicle for imaginative experience. What is essential is that it should correspond to the emotion evoked, and a great deal of Mallarmé's obscurity is due to the fact that he tried to use symbols to convey experiences which had not been transmuted into poetry. Baudelaire himself cannot be altogether exonerated from the charge of adding to the confusion and it is unfortunate that his *Correspondances* have been used by critics as a text instead of being treated as a piece of muddled psychology.

This does not mean that Baudelaire and his followers did not extend and develop the use of symbols. They undoubtedly did.

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Now the term has a variety of meanings. It includes the expanded image in *l'Albatros*, the use of the 'sea' as a symbol of liberation in the work of both Baudelaire and Mallarmé and Mallarmé's way of 'working' words in the *Swan*. These are straightforward examples. What is more interesting is Baudelaire's use of the *néant* and the *gouffre* to symbolise the void behind the façade of contemporary civilization. It is a remarkable fact that while the *néant* and the *gouffre* are filled with tragic significance, the words *le Beau* and *l'Idéal*, with which Mr. Bowra makes so much play, are little more than empty concepts, revealing the confusion in which Baudelaire is involved as soon as he tries to state his positives.

Baudelaire's successors continued his work, but the most interesting examples of symbolism are not to be found (as Mr. Bowra suggests) in Mallarmé, Verlaine and Valéry. They are to be found in Laforgue, Eliot and Rilke. It is in this direction that Laforgue was a real pioneer. In the *Derniers vers* symbols are transformed into a sort of poetic shorthand which makes possible the brilliant transitions from one set of feelings to another. When we compare the *Derniers vers* with *The Waste Land* or the *Duino Elegies*, we can appreciate the remarkable nature of Laforgue's contribution to modern poetry.

It remains to ask whether it is correct to speak of the Symbolist Movement in literature at all. We can only answer the question when we have decided what is meant by the terms 'School' and 'Movement'. Although Gide speaks of Symbolism as a 'School' and Valéry describes it as a 'Movement', there seems to me to be a sharp distinction between the two. A literary movement means that a number of poets, writing at the same time, use a similar style to express feelings which are to some extent common to them all. The founder of a school is the creator of a fresh attitude towards the universe and the inventor of a new style. He succeeds in handing on his outlook and certain elements of his style to his successors who, within the limits of this framework, express their individual reactions to the new situation. It seems to me, therefore, that what is usually described as the Symbolist Movement should be called the School of Baudelaire and that the principal members of his school are Corbière, Laforgue, Verlaine, Rimbaud and Mallarmé. We can say of Baudelaire, as Eliot says of Shakespeare, that he 'arrives at an objective world', though for reasons which I have given above it is only partly true to say that he was 'the centre and starting point' of the process, and it is inevitable under present conditions that the pattern should to a large extent, though not wholly, be 'given by what goes on in the mind'. We can say something of the same sort of Rimbaud and Rilke. In both these cases there is no doubt that the poet was 'the centre and starting point', but in one of his best passages—the discussion of Rilke's theory of 'transformation'—Mr. Bowra describes the process by which he arrives at what may be called 'an objective world'. We cannot make the same claims for the other members of the School, and it is this that makes a writer like Laforgue essentially a follower in so far as the

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attitude behind his poetry is concerned.

> 'Baudelaire', said Rimbaud in one of his letters, 'est le premier voyant, roi des poètes, un vrai *Dieu*. Encore a-t-il vécu dans un milieu trop artiste; et la forme si vantée en lui est mesquine. Les inventions d'inconnu réclament des formes nouvelles'.

It is a tribute to Baudelaire's vitality that after some early imitations of his work, the development of later writers was always *away* from the master. His verse-form was right in his time, but it was not a suitable medium for his successors. Although Rimbaud's criticism is not strictly just, it was the perception that new forms were needed that enabled Laforgue to invent the free-verse of the *Derniers vers* and Rimbaud the prose-poetry of the *Saison en enfer*, both innovations of capital importance. Mallarmé, too, developed away from Baudelaire, but his development carried him further and further away from significant experience until he ended up in the labyrinths of *Un coup de dés*.

Baudelaire's influence has been so pervasive, that it is possible to find elements in practically every poet who has since written which seem to be due either directly or indirectly to him. At the same time, I find it difficult to accept Mr. Bowra's thesis that what he calls 'the first wave of Symbolism' and what I call the School of Baudelaire gave way to anything which is sufficiently *compact* to be described as a movement. Resemblances between poets writing in similar conditions, even when they belong to different countries, and reciprocal influences, are natural. I do not think that we can say more.

MARTIN TURNELL.

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ARCHITECTURE AND SOCIETY

AN OUTLINE OF EUROPEAN ARCHITECTURE, by Nikolaus Pevsner (*Penguin Books*, 9d.).

THE CULTURE OF CITIES, by Lewis Mumford (*Secker and Warburg*, 12/6).

REBUILDING BRITAIN, for the R.I.B.A. (*Lund Humphries*, 3/6).

Mr. Pevsner has contributed a model of art history to the Pelican Series. He is at once a critic and a historian; his history is based on a critical appreciation of architecture as an art and his criticism is re-inforced by historical information. He begins with a statement of critical principles that confronts the functionalist school squarely:

> 'A bicycle shed is a building; Lincoln Cathedral is a piece of architecture. Nearly everything that encloses space on a scale sufficient for a human being to move in, is a building; the term architecture applies only to buildings designed with a view to aesthetic appeal . . .
>
> But architecture, though primarily spatial, is not exclusively spatial. In every building, besides enclosing space, the architect models volume and plans surface, *i.e.* designs an exterior and sets out individual walls. That means that the good architect requires the sculptor's and the painter's modes of vision in addition to his own spatial imagination thus architecture is the most comprehensive of all the visual arts, and has a right to claim superiority over the others.
>
> This aesthetic superiority is, moreover, supplemented by a social superiority. Neither sculpture nor painting, although both are rooted in elementary creative and imitative instincts, surround us to the same extent as architecture, act upon us so incessantly and so ubiquitously . . .
>
> This does not mean, however, that architectural evolution is caused by function and construction. A new style in art belongs to the world of mind, not the world of matter'.

As he proceeds one sees that this theory emerges from the successive examples by analysis of which he builds up his history. The last quotation is supported later by an account of the use of ribbed vaults at Durham as a form of architectural expression without any realization of their structural possibilities:

> 'The reason of the Durham builders for introducing so telling a feature must have been the very fact that it is so telling, that it represents the ultimate fulfilment of that tendency towards articulation that had driven Romanesque architects forward for over a hundred years.

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Mr. Pevsner's catholicity is as remarkable as his closeness of analysis. The following comparison sums up many pages:

> 'Thus there is very little in Wren and Vanbrugh of that plastic treatment of walls which Michelangelo had first conceived and which produced the undulating facades and interiors of Baroque buildings in Italy and Southern Germany. Movement is never in England so insinuating, nor so frantic. Spatial parts never abandon their separate existence, to merge into each other, as they do at S. Carlo or Vierzehnheiligen. The individual members, especially the solid round detached columns also try to keep to themselves. The drama lies in the visible forcing of this English aloofness into the service of an overmighty plan'.

On the other hand, once or twice I feel the description is strained to prove a case, as for example in this passage on Renaissance church of centralized plan:

> 'The building has its full effect only when it is looked at from one focal point. There the spectator must stand, and by standing there, he becomes himself 'the measure of all things'. The religious meaning of the church is replaced by a human one. Man is in the church no longer pressing forward to reach a transcendental goal, but enjoying the beauty that surrounds him and the glorious sensation of being the centre of this beauty'.

The second sentence seems to have a specious connection with the rest. I think that is is a combination of structural form and decoration that produces a non-religious effect. Structure alone may suggest movement or rest but hardly the object of contemplation and its emotional effect in either.

I wonder whether a good deal of modern building is architecture at all by Mr. Pevsner's standards. How far can a house be stripped to material fundamentals without becoming a shed for a human bicycle?

> 'As Western civilization had become more and more subdivided, it had lost its faculty to create a language of its own. An atomized society cannot have an architectural style. Can we not take it then that the recovery of a true style in the visual arts, one in which once again building rules, and painting and sculpture serve, and one in which form is obviously representative of character, indicates the return of unity to society? Granted that this new style often looks rather forbidding and seems to lack human warmth. But is not the same true of contemporary life?

This quotation should be considered along with my first group. Mr. Pevsner suggests the critical problem; the inadequacy of modern architecture springs from a disintegrated civilization where only external systems hold us together. One cannot argue simply that the principles of order in modern architecture are imposed from without; they aren't. But I think one might suggest that more or less self-contained units are linked together with often doubtful asymmetrical balance, to suit material convenience only, instead

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of being combined both internally and externally by a principle of order which expresses a unified civilized outlook. The lack of this larger principle would also explain the bareness and emptiness of most contemporary buildings. I don't agree that contemporary architecture suggests a return to unity in civilization, certainly not a unity worth having, but I think, that in the way Mr. Pevsner suggests, architecture might help towards this end. How architecture itself will renew relations with tradition, I don't know; the problem is very different from the literary problem of the early nineteen-twenties in several obvious ways. Possibly a wider and more sensitive response to past architecture after the manner of Mr. Pevsner's appreciations would have the revivifying effect. And it is impossible to separate this kind of study from considerations of social milieu and function, the large territory whose urban areas Mr. Mumford has explored.

The Culture of Cities is an anthropological study leading towards a practical type of Utopia by various routes. On a rather less ambitious scale Mr. Mumford resembles Mr. Wells in his *magna opera,* both in method and outlook. He is more acceptable when diagnosing past and present ills than when foreshadowing future developments—I say 'foreshadowing' because he claims to follow trends that already exist. His sense of ends and values, though more human and serious than Mr. Wells's, errs in the same direction. He has a very limited conception of these matters, which shows itself both when he refers to the arts of the past and to possible arts of the future. Town-planning and architecture are only part of his study but his weakness as a student of civilization is most apparent in his treatment of them. With much subtlety and wisdom in other matters, but lacking Mr. Pevsner's understanding of the relation of art to environment and wide taste, he slips into astonishing superficialities when dealing with the higher forms of human expression.

Mr. Mumford begins with a strong dislike of Baroque which for him includes all aspects of European civilization from the fifteenth century to the Industrial Revolution, except the civic life of Holland, illustrated by four very interesting plans of Amsterdam showing its orderly but organic growth—Rembrandt's career is not mentioned.

> 'The palace: the exchequer: the prison: the mad-house—what four buildings could more completely sum up the new order, or symbolize the features of its political life? It was by combinations of one or another of these institutions that the baroque community was built; and it was on variants of one or another of their plans and forms that the streets and town-planning extensions and new cities of the period were built' (p. 133).

> 'In architecture, after Brunelleschi, what was taken over was not the process, capable of modification and complete alteration as new needs arose, but the external form: the dead stereotype of another culture . . .' (p. 404).

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One could hardly state more concisely what Renaissance, Baroque and Rococo architects, in their many different ways, did not do. No one is going to deny the injustices and squalors of the ages of the Inquisition and the Despotic Monarchies, but apart from its indefensible inclusiveness the last quotation represents a wholly inadequate response to the architectures of these times. Also the layout of these cities was far less rigidly geometric than he supposes; Wölflin has pointed out the supreme importance in Baroque of movement by the spectator in the act of looking, and Mr. Pevsner suggests some interesting comparisons between Baroque and Gothic architecture, not least that of their genuine popular appeal. Mr. Mumford would no doubt reply that the social environment had corrupted popular taste.

> 'The strong solemn reds and blues of the old rose windows of the cathedrals became the frivolous blues and pinks and whites of the new baroque interior: in the rococo churches, heaven became visible in gilt and plaster: a materialization of the vulgar dream of St. John of Patmos' (p. 130).

There is a hint of sentimental mediaevalism in this. He gives a very attractive picture of the cities of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries with their privies and their public baths and their social conscience developed under the aegis of the church by a producer economy, but one can agree to most of it without believing that civilization as a whole has declined ever since. Despite his mass of detail Mr. Mumford generalizes too easily and fails in the objectivity that he pleads for in judging works of art. He argues from a judgment on the social and political life of the community to a judgment on its culture in the narrower sense and the result is as disastrous as to argue that great art necessarily indicates a healthy community. One can find out a great deal about the state of a community from the study of its artistic productions and I think that one outstanding discovery usually is that the community in the cultural and spiritual sense can survive an incredible amount of social and political evil. There is no need to condemn Versailles along with Louis XIV's politics or Racine along with bad sanitation. If we don't like them, that's our misfortune.

Mr. Mumford describes *The Insensate Industrial Town* and *The Rise and Fall of Megalopolis* that has followed it with great skill and vigour:

> 'A new trinity dominated the metropolitan scene: finance, insurance, advertising. By means of these agents, the metropolis extended its rule over subordinate regions, both within its own political territory and in outlying domains: directly, or indirectly, they expedited the flow of money back to the big centers' (p. 228).
>
> 'Under this regime, every environment bears the same taint: its abiding picture of life is colored by the same newspapers, the same magazines, the same moving pictures, the same radio' (p. 254).

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'Patrons and public alike, these *nouveaux riches* of the metropolis are culture-shoppers. They tend to transform the chief institutions of learning into vast department stores of the arts and sciences, where everything is ticketed and labelled, where bargain attractions are offered, where the turnover of goods is more important than the ultimate satisfaction of the purchaser. The growing bewilderment of the spectator, the patent sterility of his acquired knowledge and taste—none of these facts interfere with the tendency toward expansion' (p. 263-4).

'Already the *symbols* of a new order have appeared. In new buildings, new schools, a new program of living, fresh mutations, have disclosed themselves: in the biological and sociological sciences, the positive foundations for this order have been laid: an order more comprehensive than Marx conceived, and more profound in its demands and readjustments than a merely economic revolution. The next step lies in contriving the political organization appropriate to the new task, and in working out, in concrete detail, the effective economic means' (p. 298).

It is when one looks at these 'symbols' that doubts crop up. Can the sciences be the positive foundations of any genuine human order? Surely the foundations are in the civilization of the past and the task of a new order is to extend, with all the modifications necessary, the sense of cultural values which they achieved in limited spheres and classes—not so limited as Mr. Mumford would probably think. He lumps together almost all European civilization since about 1500 as rotten and classes as megalopolitan centres 'Alexandria, third century B.C.; Rome, second century A.D.; Byzantium, tenth century; Paris, eighteenth century; New York, twentieth century'.

Mr. Mumford has a vague feeling that something has been lost, even if he does not quite see where, and to what extent, some of it may survive.

'One of the main difficulties in the way of applying the advanced collective technical processes and instrumentalities of thought to the creation of a better commonwealth has been due to the dissipation of values that has taken place during the last century . . . the values of orthodox Christianity, of Protestantism, of individualistic humanism, of capitalism, of humanitarianism, of libertarianism, have been weakened, not merely through conflict, but through internal erosion. One may confidently prophesy the emergence of a new system of values . . .' (p. 378).

But from such a congeries of dying 'isms, it is not perhaps surprising that the shape of things to come should remind one at the same time of the last part of *Back to Methusaleh* and of *Brave New World*.

'. . . for it is only by saving on the means and instrumentalities of life that a community can command the necessary abundance at the higher levels of art, science, education, and

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expression the modern American kitchen . . . Such economy is the moral flower of that long discipline of the spirit which Western man has undertaken during the last millenium under the forms of monasticism, capitalism, militarism, and mechanism'
(pp. 420-1).

It is a curious puritan-hedonist mixture.

'The deflation of our mechanical monuments is no less imperative than the deflation of our symbolic monuments. For the bio-technic age will be progressively marked by a simplication of mechanical equipment . . . the Machine Age has treated machines as ornaments: it has invented the vacuum cleaner when it should have done away with the rug' (pp. 441-8).

Houses are to be reduced to prefabricated 'shells', painting and sculpture finally detached from architecture—Rodin is the bio-technic sculptor!—and it will be an 'age of sexual florescence', 'Orgy-porgy , Freud and fun'. It is these concrete suggestions and examples that give one pause. One can be carried along by the general ideas, the breaking up of the nations state into fluid natural regions in the interests of local life and international order, socialism as a basis for genuine individual freedom, the break-up of vast cities into smaller self-contained—not just satellite—centres with a full community life focussed in the schools.

'The aim is not more goods for more people to buy, but more opportunities for them to live: hence only such increases in goods as are instrumental to "the best life possible" ' (p. 464).

'The elemental unit of planning, then, is no longer the house or the houseblock: the elemental unit is the city, because it is only in terms of this more complex social formation that any particular type of activity or building has significance. And the aim of such planning is not the efficiency of industry by itself, or the diminution of disease by itself, or the spreading of culture by itself: the aim is the adequate dramatization of communal life: the widening of the domain of human significance so that, ultimately, no act, no routine, no gesture, will be devoid of human value, or will fail to contribute to the reciprocal support of citizen and community' (p. 484).

'But good-fellowship is not the whole duty of social man . . . we must provide an environment broad enough and rich enough never to degenerate into a 'model community' (p. 486).

But one comes back to the meaning of the 'best life possible', the values embodied. Mr. Mumford is no simple-minded scientific Utopia builder, yet in deflating the whole of our material set-up along with machinery, he seems to me to rob the visual arts, at least, of their background. He seems to look forward to a race of Ancients, keeping, however, their reproductive organs and instincts

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living on 'the higher levels'. It is a commonplace that the arts and appreciation of them are withering because most people see nothing but trash and I don't think the fine arts can flourish unless people live their everyday lives in a well-designed environment where there are stylistic links upwards *and* downwards. In other words we need better rugs and 'shells' to our houses that are intrinsically beautiful. Mr. Mumford thinks that:

> 'A well-directed economy will multiply by manyfold the present supply of doctors, teachers, administrators, artists, scientists and scholars' (p. 478).

It may multiply some of these, including designers of rugs and houses, but not artists in the sense he intends. They are born or they aren't but their work will be hampered in a bio-technic city by sheer isolation. Mr. Mumford defeats his own ends by a faulty realisation of what those ends are and how widely they differ one from another. One comes back to tradition and how the author apprehends it in its concrete manifestations.

We are getting away slowly from *la ville mécanique,* though I don't think that in practice bio-technic schemes differ very much. It is more than ten years now since Mr. Barton in a popular book *Purpose and Admiration* created quite a stir at the height of the Bauhaus period by attacking functionalism on its own ground and insisting on the aesthetic function of architecture. The examples of rebuilding in U.S.A., Holland, and pre-Hitlerite Germany given by Mr. Mumford have many basic features of good lay-out but they lack distinction individually and in grouping. The beauty of these schemes is in the surrounding parks and gardens, but we still have few buildings worth looking at in themselves, work as successful as the Stratford Theatre for example. The R.I.B.A.'s *Rebuilding Britain* is a nicely produced survey, but again deals mainly with lay-out. It makes a remark or two about imagination in designing but its comparisons between Georgian and twentieth-century uniformity do us no credit; the units in an Ionic colonnade have intrinsic interest, standard metal window divisions have none. I don't see the objection to the corridor street in commercial or administrative quarters. It is a very simple architectural grouping but can be satisfying; asymmetry can become as monotonous as symmetry. Examples of planning as good as that at Frankfurt-Römerstadt which Mr. Mumford illustrates with commendation are rare. For a larger satisfaction of human needs beyond mere convenience this scheme seems a praiseworthy compromise between large blocks of flats, which are unpopular with the working class majority, and endless small houses, which are usually nondescript. Architecture as an art is needed to produce more building of such a kind. Mr. Pevsner's book is a contribution towards reviving architectural sensibility by an appreciation of this art in the past. Mr. Mumford's book seems to me to fail in both the loftier and the humbler aspects of this task.

GEOFFREY WALTON.

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ACADEMIC CASE-HISTORY

HADDON THE HEAD HUNTER, by A. H. Quiggin (*C.U.P.*, 7/6).

Everyone knows that A. C. Haddon established the study of Anthropology at Cambridge. How he managed to do so is less common knowledge, so it is fortunate that the biography we have been given is frank about the subject. The facts are recorded with some appropriate though subdued indignation, and it is well that the facts should be put on record, instead of the usual humbug which whitewashes an institution at the expense of the victim. Chapters five and six, called 'Cambridge and Anthropology', provide instructive documentation about how an institution, endowed to promote learning and light, behaves when it is offered the services of a uniquely qualified specialist and teacher who is concerned to break new ground.

Haddon after leaving Cambridge became a zoologist, but an expedition he undertook to Torres Straits in 1889 convinced him that while Zoology could wait, the materials for the study of Anthropology must be collected at once before it was too late. Cecil Sharp made a similar discovery about English Folk-song and Dance, but as his materials lay at his back-door, so to speak, he was able to collect them and support himself concurrently. Haddon was in a more awkward position—his data existed in Oceania. He was urged to devote his remarkable talents to Anthropology by such eminent pioneers as Frazer and Huxley, and in 1893 Haddon moved from Dublin, where he was professor of Zoology, to Cambridge, in hopes of getting endowment. In 1898, after scraping together funds, he conducted a famous anthropological expedition, the first of its kind, having enlisted the services of W. H. Rivers, McDougall, Seligman and C. S. Myers, whom he made recruits to the new science. This Expedition achieved so much that Frazer and Ridgeway in 1899 sponsored a Memorial urging the University to provide instruction in Ethnology by creating a post for Haddon, pointing out not only his eminent fitness for the post but that 'he has already laid the University and science under great obligations by teaching Anthropology in the University without a salary for three years' and laying stress on his genius as a teacher. Alas, though the Universities were originated by great teachers and are only kept alive by them (not only spiritually but in a very material sense, since it is they who attract students to the schools), yet to arouse enthusiasm as a teacher is not the way to become *persona grata* in the academic world; and though it was well-known that the University had resources, and the Memorial was supported by many Heads of Houses and Departments, and by eight professors, all that could be got for Haddon and Anthropology was a lectureship of £50 a year, in 1900. The strength of the opposition behind the scenes may be gauged by the force of the supporting party.

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In 1901 Haddon was elected to a fellowship at his own college, and with this nucleus of an income and no facilities except those provided by the generosity of other departments, he settled down to establishing a school of Anthropology. For most of his life he had to make out an income by reviewing, writing and lecturing up and down the country in addition to his university work, and he mostly had to finance from this the equipment, materials and books he needed. In a speech on his seventieth birthday, Haddon observed: 'Our University sometimes seems to behave more like the traditional step-mother than Alma Mater—the Nourishing Mother'. There was indeed a considerable period of his life when the motto of his University must have seemed to him a bitter joke. He had, however, his work, his teaching and his enthusiastic students, and, as time went on, his grateful old pupils all over the world; and he had the support of appreciative scientists everywhere; he was sustained too by the belief that if he 'held on in Cambridge' he might get Anthropology permanently endowed there. As his biographer says, 'he had no selfish aims'; to money and status for their own sake he was perfectly indifferent. The real burden fell on his wife, who had to raise a family under the most difficult conditions of financial and psychological strain.

In 1904, in face of opposition, the Board of Anthropological Studies was officially recognized and Anthropology appeared on the Lecture List, though for ten years longer he had to depend on the goodwill of other departments even for the use of a room for lecturing or teaching. He fought the battle of Anthropology more successfully than his own, for by 1907 future Colonial administrators were being given courses at Cambridge in General Anthropology to suit their particular needs—a scheme Haddon had long urged in various quarters—and the next year a Diploma in Anthropology was established. But it was not till 1909 that Haddon's friends and admirers felt in a position to address a Memorandum to the General Board of Studies recommending that 'Dr. Haddon, an enthusiastic and inspiring teacher and an anthropologist of world-wide reputation' should be appointed Reader in Ethnology. This was successful; £200 a year was actually wrung out of the University for the purpose and Haddon appointed (though insulting opposition 'enlivened the discussion in the Senate' where the proposal was described as 'the most reckless and culpable waste of money that could possibly be imagined'). He held this princely readership till he was over seventy, resigning in 1925 'having borne the whole burden of teaching in the Department for nearly a quarter of a century'. The chair which he had so richly earned was not established until he was technically too old to be eligible, in 1933.

He died in 1940, in his eighty-fifth year. In spite of everything, or rather everybody, he had achieved much of what he had wanted and more than could possibly have been expected in the circumstances; his life was not tragic for he was happy and successful according to any real code of values, and he had all along the recognition of his peers. But why did it have to be 'in spite of'?

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Haddon was in an innocent sense a good mixer, and had connections and friends in the right places, he was even 'a regular churchgoer' and had the gift of making Anthropology acceptable to Bishops and missionaries: he was not the sort of man who is described in the academic world as 'dangerous'. For this reason no doubt no campaign of personal calumny and social ostracism was undertaken against him, as is usual in similar cases, and no hostility to his project of establishing the new study was exhibited, as might have been expected, by the contiguous schools of Archaeology, Geology, etc. The general public might well ask, who, if not professors and heads of department and Houses, supported by the testimony of pupils and outside authorities—who if not these can take action, who in fact runs our universities anyway? It almost looks as though there must be some basis for the belief I have heard expressed, that at the older universities everything is managed by committees and all those committees by a few wicked old men. This is perhaps an extreme statement; at least, the practice of intrigue is not the prerogative of the old. The answer does seem to be that the academic world, like other worlds, is run by the politicians, and sensitively scrupulous people tend to leave politics to other people, while people with genuine work to do certainly have no time as well as no taste for committee-rigging and the associated techniques. (Haddon ignored University politics and was surprised to find that 'what to him was a matter of opinion' would be to some important person 'a matter of offence'—this gives perfectly the temperature of academic life). And then of course there are the forces of native stupidity reinforced by that blind hostility to criticism, reform, new ideas and superior ability which is human as well as academic nature.[1] These

[1] *Cf.* The experiences of an unimpeachable authority, the Oxford historian Mr. E. L. Woodward (Domestic Bursar of All Souls, History Tutor of New College, Proctor, etc.) in his recent autobiography, *Short Journey*: 'I thought of these things when the wife of an elderly don told my wife that it would be nice for me to learn "how the university was run". I am bound to say that I thought it was not well run [1930 circa] and that I was astonished at the incapacity of most of the members of the university council and other bodies of administrative importance . . . . The committee system was overdone . . .' etc. He gives an instructive account of his few attempts to effect reforms in University affairs. His chief failure was an attempt to get a very obvious reform through—to persuade the authorities to make suitable provision for a modern library instead of the hopelessly congested and unsuitable Bodleian, which it was proposed to supplement by a mere bookstore in the heart of Oxford. He found that all the powers were hostile, having been canvassed by the old librarian, that he wasted a year of his time and energies in trying unsuccessfully to interest likely people in the affair, and that all he and his few supporters could achieve, beyond alienating all the elderly scholars of his acquaintance and incurring a lot of ill-will generally, was a bad compromise (and even this was

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forces are always present to be directed for their own ends by academic politicians, but perhaps they can be trusted to defeat themselves in time. Though material triumph may be lacking, a Haddon comes out on top in the end because it is he and not they who gets results and reputation, and the cause of Anthropology is eventually won. To be sure, he will incur in the process all the

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almost wrecked finally by the efforts of the opposition and only saved by the Vice-Chancellor). '. . . We might have planned, on an open site, with space for future expansion, a building which would stand as a monument to our foresight and our wisdom. And the whole business was botched, in the last resort, because one obstinate old man had not given up his job as librarian at the ordinary retiring age, and because no one had bothered to reform the constitution of the board of curators of the library. *As for me, this experience taught me a good deal about the lengths to which people will go merely to keep things as they are*'. It is hardly necessary to point out the disastrous effects of such an environment on appointments committees, for example; or what rare courage and sense of duty must be required in anyone who refuses to acquiesce in what is, however small the occasion. Obviously such a state of affairs as that outlined in this review can only exist if an innocent or cynical acquiescence in it by everyone can be taken for granted; hence one of the resulting moral obliquities is that it is not the existence of an undesirable situation, but calling attention to it, which is considered offensive and earns censure (to put these matters on record is the last crime, and in fact documents like *Short Journey* and *Haddon the Head Hunter* don't often see the light). A sociological expedition would have a fruitful yield if it undertook field-research into the academic world. And it is a world—the other universities are very largely stocked from Oxford and Cambridge and moreover are closely connected with them by social filaments, so that to be posted at one of these last is to be boycotted all round, the penalty of the *mauvais sujet* which few dare risk incurring. Another relevant point is that intellectual matters are hopelessly overlaid by social life, *e.g.* the reasons for professorial and other appointments would often repay investigation, as in general the extent to which intellectual standards have in different places been stultified by social factors and academic politics. Outside the sciences, careers founded solely on log-rolling and social contacts are not unknown, and keeping the right company is in many fields the best, if not the indispensable, means of advancement. There is a pretty general recognition that the further the subject is from being a science the less have real qualifications to do with appointments or influential position in the academic world of the humanities; this means that a great disparity commonly exists in such schools between what the body of academics recruited in this way has to offer, and the demands of their students, a situation producing discomfort or uglier manifestations of a sense of inferiority on the one side, and lasting resentment on the other. The sociology of the academic world is a sadly neglected subject.

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malice, thwarting and jealous misrepresentation which the jungle of academic society can produce. It is not surprising that the academic world should be so much like a small town, since human nature is essentially the same in both places; the grounds for indignation are that a university is supposed to be a place where different values reign, and different objects are pursued, than in the outside world. And it is true that in the realm of the sciences there is a tradition of impartial appointment and generous recognition, because in science there are objective standards to appeal to. Haddon was fortunate in having this disinterested world of science behind him; without its backing he could not have found a party to press his claims on the university and would have been wholly frustrated in his work. The real tragedies lie elsewhere.

When Haddon consulted his wife about giving up Dublin and Zoology for Cambridge and Anthropology she replied: 'You might as well starve as an anthropologist as a zoologist'. But there is the specialist of genius who cannot even starve in his own way. There was Haddon's linguistic expert, S. H. Ray, who was the only English authority on Melanesian languages available for the 1898 Expedition. 'Haddon never felt quite happy about Ray. The other members of the Expedition all rose high in the world, and he could feel that their work with him had not been unrewarded. But Ray, who had sacrificed more, had no earthly reward; he remained an assistant elementary schoolmaster to the end of his days. The file of correspondence shows the efforts Haddon made to obtain recognition for him, but all in vain, and this man of genius, one of the world's greatest authorities on Oceanic languages, was compelled to earn his living for forty years by teaching elementary arithmetic to large classes of little East-End London boys, snatching what odd hours he could spare for his linguistic work'. It was impossible to get Ray, with all his qualifications, a foothold in the academic world. He had no college to give him a tardy fellowship. For him not even a lectureship of £50 a year could be secured. All that Haddon could get for him from the academic world was an honorary M.A. degree at Cambridge. When one thinks how much money there was to dispose of in the universities, where comfortable livings seem to have been available for so many insignificant scholars and posts for so many without vocation, where young men have so freely been elected into fellowships on promissory notes that have not by any means invariably been honoured, and where, in short, the most casual glance round would reveal a number of people who seem to have no reason for being supported with income and status except their strong sense of their right to be—the tragedy of a Ray seems unnecessary.

Haddon's case, even more than Ray's, has the importance of being representative, and it represents a problem which neither Royal nor Statutory Commissions can favourably affect nor any reform that can conceivably follow on the War. If there had not been some elasticity in the departmental system at that time, Haddon could never have established himself (and Anthropology); in

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those days anyone within the university could give lectures and classes, having extracted some kind of permission, and collect the fees, if he could attract enough of an audience to make it worth while and some kind of a living for himself. This is what Haddon did. [It is through this loophole that Dr. Richards, for example, was able while in the Moral Sciences school to give lectures to English students and make his career as a new kind of specialist by publishing the results—*Principles of Literary Criticism*]. Thus even with less than no encouragement from a department an innovator or otherwise obnoxious character has been known to hold on until in the course of time it became apparent that he was in fact a great man and must be admitted, however reluctantly, into the fold, if only to avert scandal. I once heard the late W. E. Johnson, who had taught all the Cambridge philosophers from Russell on, observe that he remembered when some of the most distinguished minds and most influential teachers in Cambridge were free-lances who supported themselves, without fellowships or faculty posts, in this independent way, but that with the tightening-up of things effected by the introduction of the faculty-system, such a state of affairs had become impossible.[2] He considered this unfortunate. And it is easy to see that without such a means of bucking the party machine, so to speak, a Haddon can never again force his way into the stronghold of vested interests that faculties inevitably become. While this makes things more comfortable for the politicians and deadheads, it is not so good for the undergraduates, or for the humanities and sciences, or for the intellectual life of the universities in general, or for the prestige of a school in the outside world. But this brings us to the question, for whose benefit are the universities run? and at this dangerous point we must call a halt to speculation.

Q. D. LEAVIS.

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[2]Chiefly through the imposition of a substantial composition-fee which entitles the undergraduate to attend a number of lecture-courses authorised by the faculty. In practice it is levied on every undergraduate, even if he complains that the lectures in his subjects are unprofitable and he has not attended any of them (he still has the right to stay away at the older universities, though not at the modern ones). Thus he could hardly be expected to pay in addition separate fees for free-lance courses of lectures. He must also attend and pay for tuition by a supervisor (Oxford, tutor) selected by his college; though his right to choose his supervisor would no doubt be theoretically granted if it occurred to him to claim it, to claim it often requires considerable moral courage, particularly if the college, when stimulated to the effect by a faculty representative, signifies disapproval of his choice. Thus as a supervisor also the free-lance is debarred from competing with the regulars, so that anyone outside the ring can be starved out of the academic world. The composition-fee means that the only real check of whether a lecture-course is of value to those who pay for it—the size of the regular lecture-

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PHYSICS AND METAPHYSICS AGAIN

PHYSICS AND PHILOSOPHY, by Sir James Jeans (C.U.P., 8/6).

There is a sense in which the work of Sir James Jeans has been of great benefit to philosophy. During the comparative lull which succeeded upon the discrediting of the great speculative metaphysical systems of the nineteenth century, professional philosophers were largely occupied with taking in each other's washing—or more benevolently, setting their own house in order. However one phrases it, it remains that the conception of philosophy as a critical *activity*, with no peculiar field of thought but with an application to all other fields of thought, was, though widely proclaimed, comparatively little practised (there are, of course, some very creditable exceptions to this generalization). Yet rarely, one would have thought, had the need for this kind of activity been greater—a kind of activity which might (the idea is fascinatingly simple) have been engaged in by (for example) the 'Brains Trust'; instead of which this body itself stands almost as the exemplar of the type of intellectual irresponsibility most in need of active philosophical criticism and correction. It may be that such intellectual suburbs will one day be brought under the same jurisdiction as the philosophical metropolis; at the moment it is some encouragement that the popular work of Sir James Jeans and of writers of a similar bent should have provoked some philosophers into active criticism and careful analysis of the modes of thinking employed. This kind of approach, insisting that certain habits of language and the types of thinking they involve are not admissible, does philosophy and philosophers much greater

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audience—can be disregarded; and that the good lecturers pay for the inadequate ones. It leads also to obvious abuses, such as repeating a course year after year, even if the substance has been published in book form or has been proved useless by non-attendance. These are real grievances which have been expressed by generations of undergraduates without effect. It is not unnatural that they should take more interest than the authorities in whether they are receiving value for their parents' money and their own time. In the last number of *Scrutiny* the review of Dr. Löwe's book, *The Universities in Transformation*, quotes him as concluding: 'It may well be necessary first to educate a new generation of university teachers before real headway can be made' [in the humanities]. No doubt; and here and there perhaps they are being educated. The difficulty lies in getting them admitted into that closed circle where they should function; how does Dr. Löwe propose to find them posts, since the system sketched here is self-perpetuating and even the holes in it have now been blocked? Failing a holocaust of most of the existing personnel and radical alteration of the machinery in their hands, endowment seems the only hope. But Nuffields and Rockefellers endow only sciences.

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credit than the interminable discussion of the so-called 'problems of philosophy'.

I don't propose to attempt to add much to the wealth of relevant criticism (in *Scrutiny* among other places) of Sir James Jeans's philosophizing. The book under review is more explicitly concerned with the apparent philosophical implications of recent developments in physical theory than previous works by this author, and there is some indication that Sir James has modified his approach under the impact of criticism. Admittedly there are some echoes of the earlier philosophical phrase-making: 'Kronecker is quoted as saying that in arithmetic God made the integers and man made the rest; in the same spirit we may perhaps say that in physics God made the mathematics and man made the rest'—but Sir James's final summing-up of his conclusions shows a refreshing and unlooked-for preference for caution and the *sotto voce* that encroaches hardly at all upon his reader's charity: 'There is a temptation to try to round off our discussion by summarizing the conclusions we have reached. But the plain fact is that there are no conclusions. If we must state a conclusion, it would be that many of the former conclusions of nineteenth-century science on philosophical questions are once again in the melting-pot'. The modesty of this way of speaking provokes approval in so far as the casual reader is less likely than in previous cases to be stampeded into the swallowing of highly-coloured metaphysical lollipops by the pressure of Sir James's not inconsiderable scientific prestige; it doesn't, however, conceal the fact that in certain respects Sir James's most characteristic assumptions have remained unchanged, assumptions capable of precipitating misleading as well as useful conclusions.

Sir James's declared intention is to consider how recent changes in physical thought have affected certain problems of philosophy: 'The necessary emendations have naturally affected the scientific basis of philosophy and, through it, our approach to the philosophical problems of everyday life. Are we, for instance, automata or are we free agents capable of influencing the course of events by our volitions? Is the world material or mental in its ultimate nature? Or is it both? If so, is matter or mind the more fundamental—is mind a creation of matter or matter a creation of mind? Is the world we perceive in space and time the world of ultimate reality, or is it only a curtain veiling a deeper reality beyond?' Sir James approaches these questions by a somewhat naïve and occasionally erroneous summary of the traditional philosophical arguments (one presumes that he has voluntarily sacrificed the advantages of one who is 'a philosopher neither by training nor inclination', as announced in *The Mysterious Universe*), by a non-technical account of the actual changes in physical theories as from Newtonian mechanics to quantum mechanics and again from quantum mechanics to wave mechanics, and by a final discussion of his 'problems of philosophy' in the light of the preceding accounts. The mode of procedure is a familiar one in that the philosophical conclusions (which do, after all, occur) are not so much deductions from the

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preceding physical premises as reflections of a state of mind induced by contemplation of those premises. Conclusions on most of the problems raised are conveniently illustrated by a passage from the discussion of free-will: 'So far as the inanimate world is concerned, we may picture a substratum below space and time in which the springs of events are concealed, and it may be that the future already lies hidden, but uniquely and inevitably determined, in this substratum. Such a hypothesis at least fits all the known facts of physics. But as we pass from the phenomenal world of space and time to this substratum, we seem, in some way we do not understand, to be passing from materialism to mentalism, and so possibly also from matter to mind. It may be then that the springs of events in this substratum include our own mental activities, so that the future course of events may depend in part on these mental activities'.

This passage embodies clearly one recurrent and apparently fundamental assumption—and formerly a philosophically respectable one—that meaning can be attached to references to some unknowable reality underlying the observed phenomena; such a 'substratum', once admitted, is of course of great rhetorical convenience in so far as any desired characteristics can be attributed to it, and thereby be placed safely beyond the range of empirical investigation. In Sir James's case this way of thinking seems to have been induced primarily by consideration of the view of many physicists that the treatment of space and time as two independent concepts cannot be made to conform to the data of observation, but only the treatment of space and time as a unity. Now space and time as independent concepts, he feels, can be related to our everyday perceptions, whereas the space-time continuum can only be expressed mathematically. This and a set of analogous considerations leads to the view that the world of observed phenomena is only 'appearance', while the unobserved 'reality' is known only in its mathematical relationships: 'We are acquainted with . . . things only through the messages we receive from them through the windows of our senses, and these tell us nothing as to the essential nature of their origins. But our minds can understand and know ratios—which are pure numbers—even of quantities which are themselves incomprehensible. We can, then, acquire real knowledge of the external world of physics, but this must always consist of ratios, or, in other words, of numbers'.

Now this standpoint has one profitable outcome, which may be referred to immediately. It frees Sir James from any adherence to the arbitrary models with which scientists have illustrated their mathematical conclusions; and from any metaphysical arguments derived from such models. 'The history of theoretical physics', he says, 'is a record of the clothing of mathematical formulae which were right, or very nearly right, with physical interpretations which were often very badly wrong . . . Now when philosophy has availed itself of the results of science, it has not been by borrowing the abstract mathematical description of the pattern of events,

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but by borrowing the then current pictorial description of this pattern . . . One consequence of this is that the standard philosophical discussions of many problems, such as those of causality and free-will or of materialism and mentalism, are based on an interpretation of the pattern of events which is no longer tenable'.

So much is well said. But the point of view which permits Sir James to see so far prevents him from seeing farther. The rejection of physical interpretations (whose arbitrariness, it may be noted, was not appreciated by scientists until their construction was found to be impossible) leaves him, as a physicist, with nothing but mathematical formulae, and he can refurnish an apparently void universe only by the introduction of an unobserved 'substratum'. The flaw lies, of course, in the assumption that the subject-matter of physics is mathematical formulae. Because physical statements are nearly always nowadays expressed with mathematical symbols, it is easy to lose sight of the all-important fact that the function of these symbols is simply to express, in a convenient shorthand, quantitative relationships, and that these relationships are relationships between certain aspects of sense-experiences. Any set of mathematical formulae, however complex, when used to express a scientific conclusion is ultimately a statement that under certain specific conditions certain specific experiences (usually, though not invariably, visual experiences) can be obtained—the observation, for example, of a coincidence between the tip of a pointer and a certain mark. It is such occurrences as these that in fact constitute the 'physical interpretation' of the mathematical formulae of physics, and make any additional arbitrary conceptual interpretation superfluous.

Bearing this in mind, one is unlikely to fall into Sir James's error of supposing that the only information we have about 'reality' is embraced in certain mathematical formulae. In so far as these formulae express only quantitative relationships between occurrences, it is obvious that they yield information only about one aspect of experience, and take no account of the many non-quantitative (*e.g.* qualitative) characteristics of occurrences dealt with by sciences other than physics, and those not at present dealt with by science at all.

To achieve Sir James's conclusion that, in passing from 'the phenomenal world of space and time' to the 'substratum', we seem to be passing 'from materialism to mentalism', with its appropriate consequences, we need to assume not only the superior ontological status of quantitative relationships, but also that mathematical statements, involving, say, waves of probability, are in some way mental rather than material. Without stopping to discuss this curious usage of language, we may still wonder what profitable meaning could in any case be attached to the process of passing from mentalism to materialism. I remarked above that the arbitrariness of conceptual interpretations of physical statements, involving, for example, symbols like 'the ether', was not appreciated by scientists until the definition of such symbols was found to be

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impossible. More general concepts, like those symbolized by 'mind', 'matter' or 'causality', have yet, as far as Sir James at any rate is concerned, to endure a similar discipline. Such concepts are useful, in the (psychologically or historically) pre-symbolic stage of a science, for securing some preliminary classification of the data of observation; and it may be that the somewhat vague definitions of such concepts that are commonly assumed are no longer consistent with the way in which they are used. It may well be that, as physiology and psychology, for example, approach each other's frontiers, a distinction between mind and matter may cease to have any scientific significance, in the same way that it is claimed that the distinctions between space and time have ceased to have any scientific significance. Whether this be so or not, the observed phenomena will in any case be independent of any conceptual classification of them, and apart from those directly concerned with investigating their empirical consequences, modifications of definitions can affect only those who have emotional interests vested in the use of one word rather than another, and feel it a matter of consequence to describe exactly the same state of affairs as 'mental' rather than 'material' or 'indeterministic' rather than 'deterministic'. Only at this level can any discussion (for example) as to whether or not the quantitative relations of phenomena are to be expressed in rules of probability where the probability is sometimes less than unity be relevant to a question as to whether or not human beings possess free-will.

This review takes no account of the considerable portion of the book which offers a simplified recapitulation of developments in modern physics. This recapitulation has in any case been done elsewhere by Sir James, and its purpose in this case is avowedly to enforce the philosophical argument. I have only tried to suggest that there is no philosophical argument to enforce.

R. O .C. WINKLER.

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THOMAS MANN AND THE ABYSS

STORIES OF THREE DECADES, by Thomas Mann (Secker and Warburg, 10/6).

No introduction is needed to Thomas Mann's work, so well-known to English readers through Mrs. Lowe-Porter's excellent translations. It is, however, his novels rather than his short stories which havs attracted so much attention, and the re-publication lately of his collection of the latter creates an opportunity to emphasize a distinction, an important distinction, between Mann's work in this genre and a body of writing in recent German literature of which, at first glance, it may seem to be part and parcel.

There was something to be said for the Nazi clean-up of German literature. The novel, the story and the play had fallen into the fashion of decadence—a decadence composed of various elements, of Jewish fervidness, Viennese enervation and Freudian luridness, whose typical product was a kind of intellectualized Ethel Mannin or Vicki Baum—and so clogged were these literary forms that regeneration would necessarily be violent. Unfortunately, the clayey mysticism of 'Blubo', the Nazi Blood and Soil positives, is precisely calculated to fill one with vain regrets for the dubious excitements of Electra and Oedipus.

As a respectable, comparatively restrained, exemplar of this pre-Nazi phase, we may take the late Stefan Zweig. There is nothing outrageous about his stories (as in the translated collection *Kaleidoscope*) and yet that attitude of mind we must call decadence is everywhere: the slightly avid interest in unnatural or unusual situations, in personalities which edge just a little towards perversion of some kind, the growing pains of adolescence or the quirks and peccadilloes of maturity. One of Zweig's own titles, *Verwirrung der Gefühle* ('Confusion of the Emotions') is an adequate description of his work: not the strong meat of the Satanists, hardly the true Nietzschean *Schrecklichkeit*, and too light to be grouped with the pseudo-pedantic Sex Novel—but, rather, a mild adventure of the emotions in a slightly off-colour atmosphere.

It would be easy, reading some of Mann's stories and knowing nothing of the major works, to assume the same kind of interest and the same unsatisfactory kind of achievement, and admittedly in some of the lesser stories there is little more. But it is impossible to reconcile such dilettantism with the superbly solid *Bildungsroman, Buddenbrooks*. And Mann's long-famous second novel, *The Magic Mountain*, combining all the technicalities of disease and an infinitude of excursions into the mind's holes and corners with an irreproachably cool mastery of material and a persistent moralism, is in itself sufficient guarantee of Mann's seriousness.

But at the moment I am concerned with the stories and with the way in which they stand in their own right as something radically

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different from that magazine exoticism they might for a moment seem to resemble. Two at least, *Tonio Kröger* and *Death in Venice*, are major works of art, and both of these are *Kunstlerromane*—novels of the artist and the artistic life. The artist-hero is fair game for an inferior writer who has not sufficient in the way of creative ideas to enable him to start from scratch with more conventional characters, but it is a far cry from Vicki Baum and *The Constant Nymph* to Mann's 'Held der Kunst'. Perhaps the most remarkable feature of his *Kunstlerroman* is the intellectual acuteness—the aphoristic procedure, one might almost say. There is none of the old romantic flapdoodle about equivocally creditable artists: these stories are, in a way, an aesthetic, a critique, a minute examination of the ardours, satisfactions and dangers of the profession of art. There is something of *Wilhelm Meister* in them—a tenacious moral questioning; an extreme case is the scholarly documentation and the interesting Goethe-criticism of his novel *Lotte in Weimar*.

Without doubt, *Death in Venice* is Mann's finest story, and a short précis may indicate what I meant by using the term 'moralism' in connection with Mann. There is nothing sensational about Aschenbach, the writer, as we meet him at the beginning of the story: if Teutonic, he is of the Goethean, not the Wagnerian, type. The character of his work is emphasized deliberately—'remote on one hand from the banal, on the other from the eccentric'—he is an older and wiser Tonio Kröger who has broken away from the precious and the *raffiné*. His writing is a 'condemnation of all moral shilly-shallying', for Aschenbach has renounced, and not in ignorance, the abyss: we are told of his novel, *The Abject*, 'which taught a whole grateful generation that a man can still be capable of moral resolution even after he has plumbed the depths of knowledge'. Aschenbach is now a firmly established and respected author, and an ageing man; above all, he is the very antipode of the decadent artist. The story simply is a parable of the dangers confronting the artist, even such a disciplined, 'classical' artist as Aschenbach. While Tonio Kröger inclines to decadence (though very self-critical still—'an artist with a bad conscience') and his story is the expression of the artist's squivocal position both in his own eyes and in society's, Aschenbach's fate is genuine tragedy: it is Mann's own antithesis between Schiller and Goethe, hero and god, and the fall of a god is more terrible. This study of a deliberately anti-romantic writer's ghastly precipitation into that evil cess-pool he has hitherto denounced with his pen is something quite apart from the decadent's wallowing in decadence (I am thinking now, not of Tonio Kröger, but of the *Nervenmensch* of the turn of the century) which has titillation value or casebook interest, but none other.

Aschenbach decides to take a much-needed holiday in Venice, yet whether Venice is his conscious choice is a matter of some doubt. The affair is immediately invested with sinisterness as Aschenbach encounters an old drunken man painted to look youthful, and hereafter the symptoms of unhealth and decay multiply rapidly. Aschenbach thinks of Venice as 'the incomparable, the fabulous, the like-

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nothing-else-in-the-world', but it becomes, for him, something infinitely more dangerous: the very symbol of decadence, of the poisonously 'Beautiful', reflecting and stimulating his own 'exotic excesses of feelings'. 'Half fairy tale, half snare', the city swiftly succumbs to plague while Aschenbach's character is yielding just as swiftly to emotional fevers. The climax of Aschenbach's degradation is his love for Tadzio, the Polish boy, 'beauty's very essence'. He realizes how near to the abyss he is: 'it seemed to him as though the moral law were fallen in ruins and only the monstrous and perverse held out a hope', but he is no longer competent to deal with the dangers which beset him. The final ignominy is the rejuvenation of Aschenbach's face—a bitter flashback to the young-old man who had so disgusted him at the beginning of his holiday. Death is the only possible release.

The conception and mode of operation of the story is wholly opposed to, say, Huxley's pictures of life among the artists: it is not frivolity on Mann's part that Aschenbach should degenerate as he does—*neither is it cynicism—it* is, in fact, a serious recognition of the 'odds'. Similarly, it is because Mann has painted the devil and his weapons so vividly that we feel no contempt, but only pity for the man who has been dragged down into hell, mingled with a certain terror for ourselves. The odds that the individual may have to face are set out in far greater scope, of course, and with a more inclusive significance in *The Magic Mountain,* that great panorama of morbidness and decay, and these two works demonstrate sufficiently, I think, the difference between the artist whose subject is decadence and the artist who *is* decadent.

Mann's drive against those elements which tend to overthrow willpower and to sap the ability to *live* with confidence—his anti-decadent animus, we might call it—is visible in its most elementary form in some of the lesser stories:

> 'Self-contempt and bad conduct stand in the most frightful mutual relation: they feed each other, they play into each other's hands, in a way shocking to behold'.

Self-respect, after all, is the prime necessity if one is to face the world with a brave exterior. Elsewhere he writes:

> 'It is a fact that everybody is much too preoccupied with himself to form a serious opinion about another person. The world displays a readiness, born of indolence, to pay a man whatever degree of respect he himself demands. Be as you will, live as you like—but be bold about it, display a good conscience, and nobody will be moral enough to condemn you. But once suffer yourself to become split, forfeit your own self-esteem, betray that you despise yourself, and your view will be blindly accepted by all and sundry'.

Such wisdom, on the lips of rogues like Krull, is intended in a spirit of irony of course, but not merely so. Mann really has more sym-

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pathy for the successful charlatan, the 'Archswindler', who is aware of his anti-social tendencies but retains a goodly measure of self-respect, than for a more respectable but weaker character who, like the 'Dilettante', is beaten all round by that lusty bourgeois conception, Life.

Some of the *Stories of Three Decades* are slight enough—studies in abnormality and maladjustment which surely served a useful purpose as groundwork for *The Magic Mountain*—and some, like *Tobias Mindernickel, The Blood of the Walsungs* and, excellently done, *Mario the Magician,* are typical examples of the melodramatic side of German literary decadence. But these are pleasingly balanced by immaculately sane writing like the really interesting 'reportage' of *A Man and his Dog*. None lack interest of some kind, and a few are incomparable.

D. J. ENRIGHT.

MUSIC

The following is the close of a note that arrived too late for full inclusion:

Finally perhaps I may mention a venture which has grown directly out of my own work in adult education—and in a sense out of my writing in *Scrutiny*—the formation of a music club in the district in which I work, with the dual aim (the two aspects cannot be separated) of encouraging a more organic attitude to musical tradition by the performance of (mainly) pre-eighteenth-century music and of fostering a more intimate relation between the contemporary composer and his potential audience—at least that portion of it which has as its nucleus the people who attend music classes in this district. A citation of the meetings so far arranged will indicate most clearly the nature and scope of the scheme:

Sept. 11th.	Marc Blitzstein in excerpts from his own theatre and film music (By permission of the U.S. Army). And the Zorian String Quartet in works by Britten and Tippett.
October	Antoinette and Edmund Rubbra in 17th century violin music and works by Rubbra.
December	Alan Bush (and others) in his own choral and chamber works (By permission of Col. Wallace Benson, C.B.E., D.S.O., R.A.M.C.).
January	Helena Cook in 12th to 17th century, and contemporary, French and English songs.
March	Samuel Kutcher in violin works by Bach, Tartini, Leclair and van Dieren.
April	Egon Wellesz talking about and playing his own music.

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Michael Tippett will address a later meeting; and I hope it may be possible to arrange meetings at which Benjamin Britten, Peter Pears, Alan Rawsthorne and Peter Stadlen (in works by Schönberg and Webern) will appear.

Patently there's no reason why such ventures as this and the Morley College concerts should be isolated ones. They will have to grow and extend all over the country if there's to be a real future for our musical culture. There's no reason at all why they shouldn't. Of course it requires a little impetus and energy to put the machinery into motion; but if one fatalistically says, there's no alternative, one must passively accept one's Rachmaninov and Tchaikowsky, one's Beethoven and Brahms, even one's Mozart and Bach, one won't get a liberal musical education: neither will one deserve to.

The concerts mentioned above will be held at Leamington Spa which is central and easily accessible (on the main line from Paddington to the North). Any *Scrutiny* readers who would care to come to any of them and would be able to (they vary between Saturday evenings and Sunday afternoons), would be welcome and can obtain further information about dates, place and programmes from me at Hillcrest, Norton Lindsey, Warwick.

W. H. MELLERS.

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